OCTOBER 1960

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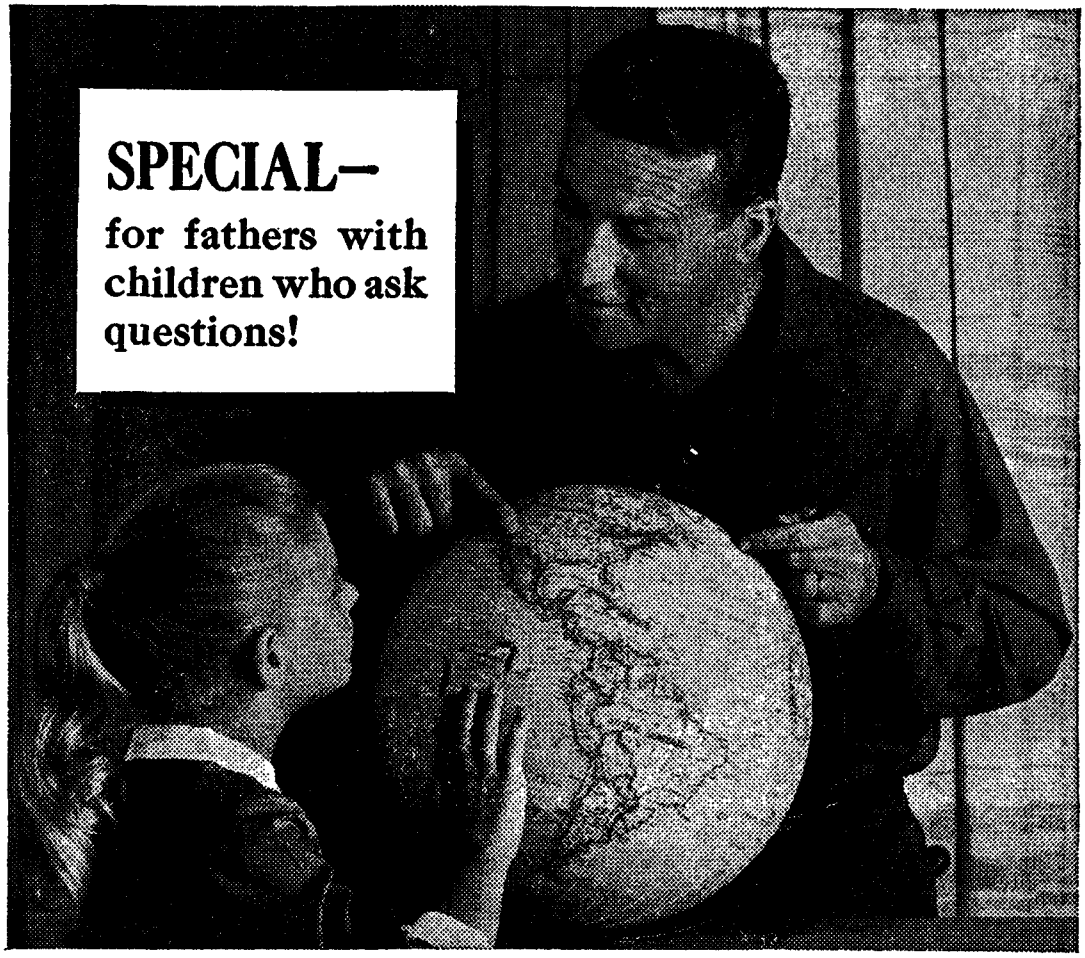

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The Protestant "Establishment," Catholic Dogma, & the Presidency

ARTHUR HERTZBERG

AFTER more than a year of discussion, culminating in the statement last month by Norman Vincent Peale and a number of other conservative Protestants, the "religious issue" in the coming election seems finally to have been defined: it concerns the First Amendment to the Constitution, which prescribes that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

So far (the middle of September) the public discussion has been fairly temperate in tone. To be sure, some Protestant spokesmen, especially Southern Baptists, are beginning to raise the ghost of a Roman Catholic "octopus" which—in the words of Dr. W. A. Criswell of Dallas—"covers the entire world and threatens those basic freedoms for which our forefathers died." Yet even among the Southern Baptists there has been some gain in reasonableness. The incumbent president of this denomination, Dr. Ramsey Pollard of Memphis, for example, went out of his way at the last national convention in May to reject the canard that the Knights of Columbus take oaths of implacable hatred against non-Catholics.

In any case, the passions of the Southern Baptists, and the even greater ire of the "holiness" sects which compete with them in their own region, cannot be taken as representing the mainstream of Protestant opinion. This opinion is promulgated by such churchmen as Dr. James A. Pike, the Episcopal Bishop of California; Dr. G. Bromley Oxnam, the former chairman of Methodism's Council of Bishops; and Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, the immediate past president of the National Council of Churches and the incumbent highest officer of his own demonination, the Presbyterian. All three have recently spoken out with considerable positiveness—in the magazines *Life, Look, The Reader's Digest*—against the prospect of a Catholic in the White House (Pike more guardedly than the others). But these men have clearly not been reading any anti-Catholic rewrite of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. They know that those faithful to Rome are not conspiratorial agents in a plot to dominate the world, that Catholics owe no political allegiance to the papal

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state, and that Senator Kennedy's candidacy is not a maneuver conceived in the Vatican. What makes them "uneasy"—the word comes from an article by Blake and Oxnam—is their fear that a Roman Catholic in the White House is likely to be a less than wholehearted protector and defender of the First Amendment.

Protestant spokesmen have used two kinds of argument, one having to do with present Catholic policy, and the other with Catholic dogma, to support their contention that Catholics are untrustworthy in their attitude toward the principle of separation guaranteed by the First Amendment. At present, say the Protestants, the Roman Catholic church is the major force responsible for maintaining the laws against birth control on the books of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Moreover, despite the grave threat to the whole world posed by the population explosion, the Roman Catholic church is the sole, and to date the determining, opponent of our government's participation in birth control programs abroad. The Catholic community has also been fighting hard for more and more state aid to its parochial schools, and it seems to be looking forward to the day when the bulk of the cost of running the schools, except for that small fraction incurred in the direct teaching of religion, will be borne by the taxpayer. Finally, the Roman hierarchy—both the Vatican and its subordinates in America—has remained silent while, as Pike has remarked, "Protestants have been having a very rough time in Spain, in Italy, and in a number of Latin American countries."

THE more general and fundamental Protestant argument is based on Catholic dogma. In 1864 Pius IX decreed the *Syllabus of Errors* as infallible doctrine. In this document all the characteristic "stigmata" of the liberal democratic state (e.g. freedom of personal conscience, the free exercise of all religions, public schools independent of the church, and the non-intervention of the state in behalf of the Catholic faith) were declared to be pernicious errors. This listing, the Protestant controversialists affirm, remains orthodox Catholic doctrine to the present, and is even taught in American Catholic schools. As evidence, Blake and Oxnam in their joint article in *Look,* and Pike in his new book, *A Roman Catholic in the White House,* quote from a recent Catholic text (*Catholic Principles of Power,* by Msgr. J. A. Ryan and Father F. J. Boland): "The state should officially recognize the Catholic religion as the religion of the commonwealth." Protestant worship and the teaching of Protestant doctrine may be tolerated, Ryan and Boland continue, only if they are carried out inconspicuously and without any attempt to convert Catholics. "Error has not the same rights as truth."

Blake and Oxnam know, and Pike (a convert from Catholicism) knows perhaps even better, that the anathemas of the *Syllabus* (or of Ryan and Boland's text) do not express what all Catholics feel. Father J. A. O'Brien, a theologian from Notre Dame, emphasized in an earlier article in *Look* (to which, in fact, the one by Blake and Oxnam was the reply), that the Catholic communion in America has never deviated from its support of separation between church and state. It is well known (even Pike attests to it) that most American Catholics, led by their American Bishops, strongly uphold the ideal of a pluralistic America which offers complete religious freedom for all. Leaders of the contemporary American hierarchy have often declared their devotion to the Constitution, including the First Amendment, and have disclaimed any intention of bending the power of the state to their own religious aims, even in the unlikely event that Catholics were to become a majority in America. Pike quotes at some length and approvingly from the writings of a leading American Jesuit theologian, John Courtney Murray, who has labored hard

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to define an "American view" grounded in basic Roman Catholic principles, which would affirm the equality of all religions before the state and willingly accept all the implications of a pluralistic society. Blake and Oxnam are, however, convinced that such Catholic liberals constitute a small minority, that even here in America their church does not support their views with any consistency, and that the binding and effective Catholic position remains that of the *Syllabus*. Pike generally agrees, but is rather more willing to grant that for an individual American Catholic like Senator Kennedy there may be some room for personal choice: between orthodox dogma and the "American interpretation."

The Roman Catholic community has had little choice but to react defensively to the attack. Its leaders have reminded the Protestants that it was they, and not the Roman Catholics, who enacted the Massachusetts and Connecticut birth control laws back in the 19th century when Protestant doctrine was in full agreement on this matter with the Catholic. Why, then, demand of Roman Catholic legislators that they strain their consciences today to undo what they did not create in the first place? On the question of parochial schools, Catholics have, by and large, given two answers. First, they are asking only for fringe benefits, like bus transportation, which the Supreme Court has held constitutional; second, they point out that in a democracy like England, church-sponsored schools of all kinds are supported by the state with no harm to freedom—it is even possible, they say, to justify such a system for America by interpreting the First Amendment to mean the friendly neutrality of the state among all the various sects, not its separation from all religion. Catholics insist that the quarrel over birth control stems not from their lack of concern over the population explosion, but from their conviction that mechanical devices are contrary to natural law, and they continue to urge further exploration of the church-sanctioned rhythm method. Some Catholics, moreover, have publicly deplored excesses against Protestant missionaries in countries like Colombia and Italy, and certain elements in the church have been consistently anti-Franco. At any rate, Catholics argue, the blame for anti-Protestant incidents abroad belongs not to the church but to mobs. Nor is the picture all of one color. No state is more Catholic than Ireland, and yet other faiths enjoy complete freedom of religion there. On the other hand, Protestant Switzerland still excludes the Jesuits by law, and Lutheran Sweden continues certain legal disabilities of Catholics.

On the matter of basic dogma, the Catholic defense has been that the classic Roman Catholic doctrine can only be defined, in the words of the liberal Catholic weekly *Commonweal,* "as a textbook position" suitable to a "sacral civilization." At the end of days, when the truth as taught by the Catholic church will have been accepted by all mankind, then the civil and religious order will be one and church and state will be interchangeable. But as a guide for present conduct (*Commonweal* continues), "whether it be applied in the United States or Spain," such words are "out of date, and useless, and even harmful." More eloquently still, John Courtney Murray said two years ago, at a seminar convoked by the Fund for the Republic, that "the highest political good, the unity which is called peace, is far more a goal than a realization. . . . Religious pluralism is against the will of God. But it is the human condition; it is written into the script of history. It will not somehow marvelously cease to trouble the City."

One might suppose from the arguments of the Protestant spokesmen that Protestant devotion to the principles embodied in the First Amendment was absolute and unswerving. However, there is ample evidence—both in the history of

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Protestantism and in the current state of the American Protestant community—to indicate that the Protestants' commitment to the amendment is itself ambiguous.

Historically, far from adhering to the First Amendment as a basic "Protestant principle" (of which the supreme example cited by Bishop Pike is Luther's early opposition to both church and state on grounds of individual conscience: "Here I stand; I can do no other"), the major Protestant sects in colonial America were clearly hostile to Protestant non-conformity. In Virginia (which had an Anglican establishment), any parent who did not believe in the doctrine of the state-church could be deprived of guardianship of his children. The dominant Congregational (Calvinist) faith in colonial New England, the church of the Mathers and Jonathan Edwards, even more fiercely dogmatic, most assuredly did not believe that men could be left, in their innate wickedness, to choose their own doctrine and moral standards. Anne Hutchinson was exiled to her death by this church over a point of doctrine and Roger Williams fled before it into the wilderness.* It was not until the second half of the 18th century that the influence of this kind of thinking began to wane in America. Skepticism and deism were now the fashionable philosophies of an intellectual elite for which Thomas Jefferson spoke, and individualistic non-conformist sects like the Baptists and Methodists had become the accepted representatives of a frontier society. An alliance between these two forces —the deists and the Protestant non-conformists—guaranteed the enactment of the First Amendment. It is not too much to say that church and state were separated by our fundamental law largely to end the persecution of Protestants by other Protestants on these shores.

So complete has been the victory of Protestant non-conformity in America that even the once-opposing sects have almost forgotten the ancient battle: two of the most eloquent defenders of the so-called "Protestant principle" today are Eugene Carson Blake, the official heir of their Calvinist tradition in America, and James A. Pike, a bishop of the Anglican communion. Nevertheless, the struggle which resulted in the First Amendment is not altogether over, and the "Protestant principle" is still in process of practical and theoretical definition, as it has been since the dawn of the Reformation. Though there appears to be Protestant unity in defense of the First Amendment in contrast to some division and equivocation among Roman Catholics, the Protestant ranks are in fact split: the nativists see the First Amendment as debarring any Roman Catholic, under any conceivable circumstance, from the Presidency, while the more responsible elements recoil from so extreme an interpretation. But then the latter group is itself divided. Just as the problems of the Catholics in regard to the First Amendment stem from their doctrine of the "true church," Protestants are, on their side, similarly confronted by a set of difficulties which derive from the universal Christian belief that Christianity is the "true faith."

THE major example of the Protestant conflict is in the issue of public schools. Opposing Catholics on state aid to parochial schools, most Protestants still share the almost unitary view of the Catholics that the public schools need greater religious influences. Released and dismissed time, religious "common core" curricula, prayers in home rooms, Christmas symbols and celebrations, have all been fought for not only by Catholics but also by the majority of Protestants. In two cases currently before the courts, in Miami and in Morris County, New Jersey, the Protestant ministry has appeared to testify against the plaintiffs, who have argued that all such practices are contrary to the

* Congregationalism remained the established church in Massachusetts until 1833, when finally, and against its will, it was severed from official position within the state.

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First Amendment. Last spring Dr. J. Calvin Rose, the president of the greater Miami Council of Churches (Protestant), stated his essential premise: "I can see no reason why we should turn to a pagan concept of life when we profess to be a Christian nation." In the courts, Protestants have argued that the First Amendment requires freedom *for,* not freedom *from,* religion—and, practically, in this context religion means, as various observers have pointed out, a kind of lowest common denominator Christianity.

Some Protestants are aware that such thinking is inconsistent. It is not possible to interpret the First Amendment both as prohibiting state aid to the parochial schools and permitting religious exercises in the public schools. In the very midst of current controversy about a Catholic in the White House, C. B. Deane, the president of the North Carolina Baptist Convention, insisted before part of his constituency in July that "We North Carolina Baptists might search our souls to be sure that we ourselves are free from compromise. It is so easy to point the finger at . . . other churches and other creeds and say 'I am right and you are wrong.'" There have in fact been instances of turndowns, by Southern Baptists and other Protestant groups, of state aid to their religious institutions, in order to maintain a consistent position on the separation of church and state. Unitarians, whose creed is an ultimate outgrowth of Protestant dissent, have stood strongly against any and all religion in the public schools, as have some highly liberal groups inside the Protestant Church. Nonetheless, it came naturally to the lips of a Methodist bishop and a Baptist minister to pronounce this a "Christian country" in invocations before the recent Democratic convention. In short, to the mind of many Protestants and most Catholics, agnostics and secularists are somehow un-American, and Jews are a bit suspect of the disease of secularism because secularists are among their allies in the battle against any religion in the public schools.

Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr have suggested that, at least vis-à-vis Judaism, Christianity should adopt a policy of complete religious parity, on the ground that each is equally valid revelation. The logic of their stand, as their Protestant critics have pointed out, would tend to lead to the end of missionary activity among all other faiths, not only the Jewish. At most, it would make the Christian claim to exclusive possession of ultimate divine truth into a suspended assertion, awaiting proof at the end of time. This is today perhaps even less acceptable to the majority of Protestants than John Courtney Murray's kind of reasoning—concerned with outlining a more liberal and viable definition of the Catholic dogma—would seem to be to the orthodox prelates of the Roman curia. The doctrine of the "true faith," the source of the Protestant dilemma, thus has practical consequences in American public life as surely as the more limited Catholic doctrine of the "true church"—and both involve the First Amendment. These two dilemmas—Protestant and Catholic—are real and continuing; they will be with us after the present election has long been history.

GIVEN the less than absolute commitment of the Protestant community to the First Amendment, one may doubt that the uneasiness of its leading spokesmen over the prospect of a Roman Catholic in the White House is ultimately rooted in fear for the principle of separation. Pike, for example, finds grounds for objecting even to Senator Kennedy's declaration —first made more than a year ago, and reiterated strongly at a press conference last month in Texas—of absolute commitment to the First Amendment: "Whatever one's religion in his private life may be for the officeholder, nothing takes precedence over his oath to uphold the Constitution and all its parts. . . ." Kennedy's statement, Pike argues, "would seem . . . to represent the point of view of a thor-

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oughgoing secularist," and is therefore just as objectionable, according to the Protestant Bishop, as the stand of an orthodox Catholic. The conundrum with which the ablest of Protestant cross-examiners has challenged the Roman Catholic running for the Presidency amounts to saying: are you a good or a bad Catholic? If you are a bad Catholic, I gravely doubt whether I can trust a conscience that is lacking in piety to God. If you profess to be a good Catholic, then I cannot trust the church which is the maker of your conscience, for it will bind you to notions and positions which are an affront to American freedom.

What, then, is *really* bothering men like Pike, Oxnam, and Blake? The answer, I think, has to do with the claim of the Roman Catholic church to be the one true church. Almost every one—if not all—of the major Protestant denominations believes itself to be the most nearly correct approximation on earth of the church invisible, but to the Protestant mind only the church invisible is the true church. Protestants today (it was not always so) are, therefore, predisposed to be fairly relativistic about denominational structures and not to regard it as a matter of the gravest importance if a Presbyterian chooses to become a Methodist or a Quaker. Nowhere in American Protestantism, except perhaps among the highest of high church Anglicans, does the notion exist that a ministry or hierarchy is absolute guide in matters of faith and morals. Nor is Protestantism particularly hampered by its own canon law—which can be changed with considerable ease and with little apology to the past. In theory, one may credit this flexibility (as does Bishop Pike, following Paul Tillich) to the ultimate "Protestant principle," i.e. that the individual has the right to express what he believes in his conscience to be God's judgment on both church and state. Actually, for most conventional Christians, the "Protestant principle" in practice means that the individual may accept or ignore as much of the teaching of his church as he chooses. At the same time, neither he, nor anyone else, doubts for a moment that he feels a sense of ultimate piety to God.

John Kennedy, Roman Catholic though he be, stands clearly within this general tradition. Protestant debaters may call it bad theology when he makes a distinction between what he will do, in individual conscience, as an officer of government, and what he believes, in matters of faith and morals, as the member of a church he attends on Sundays; yet this distinction is exactly what the "Protestant principle" involves for most Americans.

As MANY have noted, Richard Nixon in having abandoned the pacifism of his Quaker origins, while still retaining an involvement in the Quaker meeting, is acting precisely in accordance with this same principle. Why, then, is Nixon not challenged for being a bad Quaker in the same way that Bishop Pike has questioned the piety of that most "Protestant" of Catholics, Senator Kennedy? Because standing behind Kennedy, if only on Sundays, Protestants see a church which declares, as a matter of faith, that Protestants are heretics, or, more softly, "separated brethren." The Catholic claim that "there is no salvation outside the church" may be less than absolute. Indeed, a priest was excommunicated in Boston some years ago for being too narrow in his understanding of this principle. Nonetheless, the claim makes traumatic listening for many Protestants—and they do not want to hear its echo, if only in their imagination, every time a President may hear the Mass.

This hidden fear explains why Blake and Oxnam have made a distinction between the Presidency and all other political offices. They regard Catholic mayors, judges, governors, etc. with equanimity, but balk at a Catholic President—a completely illogical stand in the realm of actual political practice. On the record, after all, Roman Catholics in local or state offices have been much more responsive

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to the doctrines and needs of their church than Roman Catholics in national politics. Aid to parochial schools has often been granted by city councils and state legislatures, yet there has never been a formally organized "Catholic bloc" in Congress in its behalf. (Nor has Justice Brennan or the late Justice Murphy been any less stalwart in the defense of the First Amendment than their colleagues on the Supreme Court.) If Senator Kennedy has left many Protestants unhappy by the obvious discomfort with which he has discussed the issue of birth control, these Protestants are certainly made much more unhappy by existing practice in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Indeed, Catholics in all areas of national government have for decades shown that they can, somehow, find an accommodation between the needs of the day and the dogma of their church. In the question of birth control, for example, the old scholastic distinction between "sin," which is a religious category, and "crime," which is an act punishable by the state, is available, as a few Catholic liberals have suggested.

Why, then, do Blake and Oxnam, as well as Pike, balk only at the Presidency? The answer would seem to be that they have an almost mystical regard for the Presidency as the incarnation of "the American way of life," which they tend to identify, for historical reasons, with non-conformist, individualistic Protestantism. Such Protestantism, in the deepest sense, is the American "establishment" as Protestants envisage it, and the Presidency is as much its head as the Queen of England is the head and highest exemplar of the Church of England.

And thus we come face to face with the true paradox with which Blake, Oxnam, and Pike confront a Roman Catholic candidate for the highest office. They are less fearful of what he will do than they are of the possible consequences of having a non-Protestant as the head of a "Protestant establishment." For example, Blake and Oxnam say: "A Protestant President is free to participate in the many interfaith activities that have been built up so carefully over the years. But a Roman Catholic is not. Even if special permission were granted to a Catholic President by a Catholic Bishop, Protestants can hardly be expected to relish the picture of a President under the authority of any other person with respect to his duties as President." Obviously, Blake and Oxnam know that going to interfaith occasions is not a constitutional "duty" of the President; they are well aware that our earliest Presidents were not noted for attending any kind of religious exercise. But their argument does make sense on cultural and emotional grounds. Interfaith activity has become one of the "duties" of any President who would fit the image set by our Protestant-permeated culture. Hence Blake and Oxnam can assert that Catholics are acceptable without question in any other office: "a mayor or senator or governor is not the President. He does not represent or symbolize all the people."

Thus the responsible Protestants have this in common with the nativists whom they have been trying hard to discredit: both groups wish to preserve the image of a Protestant America—an image that would be jeopardized by the election of a Catholic to the Presidency. In order to appreciate the force of this sentiment—which is very powerful among the nativists and perhaps only atavistic among the responsible Protestants—one must first recall that all three of the major religions in America have an ethnic aspect and that the struggle, in this country at least, between Protestants and Catholics, is in part a struggle between the oldest American stock and the post-bellum immigrants.

Since 1865 some thirty-five million immigrants, the overwhelming majority of them non-Protestant and non-Anglo-Saxon, have poured into this country. The first generation came out of hunger and looked to America for bread. In the next generation, the American-born children

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of the newcomers, the move from the ghettos began and, with it, some preliminary bids for a political role, at least on the local and state level. Today, the third generation is full grown. It has no immigrant memories, and it has almost forgotten all the languages brought by the grandparents. This generation is thoroughly assimilated to the dominant moods and modes of contemporary America. They will allow no one to tell them that they are less American than the descendants of an older majority—nor will they, for that matter, hesitate to force change upon their churches and ethnic groups in order to resolve any differences with American society as a whole. The conservatives in the groups from which they spring may yield with reluctance and the nativists of the majority may beat the drums of prejudice yet again, but this generation will not be denied the very highest place in America. Whether or not John Kennedy wins or loses on November 8, 1960, the wave of the last century of immigration must eventually crest at the White House.

Nativist bigots know this very well, and they are trying to halt what to a historian must seem inevitable, using the First Amendment as their most important "legitimate" weapon. The irony is, however, that responsible Protestants like Blake, Oxnam, and Pike will necessarily be forced by these extremists into giving up their own insistence that Catholics are less trustworthy defenders of the First Amendment than Protestants: they cannot but be uncomfortable when nativists quote from them with approval. Indeed, Bishop Pike in a sermon in Detroit on September 4 denounced the nativists with prophetic fervor, and similar declarations were made last month by a large group of clergymen and religious scholars, which Bishop Oxnam joined, after the Norman Vincent Peale statement was released. Responsible Protestants cannot in all conscience argue for debarring Catholics forever from the Presidency; all they can do is express doubt as to whether the Catholic community in this country has, as of 1960, "really" arrived at full "political maturity" —which must be taken to mean whether it now thinks of itself and its spiritual polity in the dominant Protestant mode. And in any event, their main objective in the present debate is to get an acceptance by Rome of the equality before God of all the Christian churches.*

It is still impossible to say how these various conflicts will express themselves at the polls in November. Nativist bigotry may very well evoke counter-action in Kennedy's favor, both among Catholics and Protestants. And what of the Jews? It has been held for a long time, with considerable justice, that Jews tend to make common cause with Protestants in the tension areas of American inter-religious adjustment, and some observers have therefore reasoned that the "Jewish vote" is likely to go against Kennedy. But quite apart from the evidence that American Jews do not vote in a bloc on any question, there is also good reason to doubt that the "religious issue" in the present campaign will tend in Nixon's favor among Jewish voters.

In theory, Jews share the Protestant opposition to aid to parochial schools and limits on birth control. They would prefer, as much as Protestants, to find Roman Catholics participating in interfaith activities without any inhibition, for Jews, by far the smallest of the major religious communities, find perhaps the greatest emotional comfort of all in such symbols of equality. Nonetheless, on the immediate matters which confront Jews in their daily lives, Protestants are the source of their

* When Pope John announced the call for a Council of Churches a year ago, the prompt response of the Protestant World Council of Churches was that the churches it represents would be willing to attend provided Rome accepted the full equality before God of the Protestant communion. If Rome, however, insisted that it was the true church and the others were there to be re-united to it on some basis, Protestants could not in all conscience take part.

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discomfort perhaps more often than Catholics. Nativism is a sin disavowed by the Protestant church, but it is a sin of Protestants. So, for the most part, is segregation. The quarrels about restricted housing in the best suburbs (e.g. Grosse Pointe) and social restrictions in clubs and hotels generally embroil Jews with Protestants and not with Catholics. In the last two decades Jews have been moving, perhaps more than any other group, to the suburbs, to encounter the Protestant earlier settlers as a considerable bar to their complete acceptance. It is also pertinent that the major cities of the Northeast, which contain the large majority of American Jews, have for decades been mostly dominated by Catholic populations and political machines. Control by Catholics has led to many tensions but a real measure of accommodation has also been evident.

STILL, issues involving the First Amendment are the fundamental consideration. The public school touches almost every Jewish family, and even a rabbi's children occasionally come home in December singing Christmas carols. Here the Christian doctrine—shared by both Catholics and Protestants—of the "true faith" becomes a more or less painful and immediate issue for Jews. On this problem of religion in schools there is little comfort to be had by Jews from the Catholic church, but in actual practice (because the majority of Catholic children attend parochial schools) the Jewish community finds itself often fighting Protestant majorities in school boards and school administrations. On the other side, there is the support that the absolute separation of church and school receives from some of the most distinguished Protestant leaders, though Jews are more likely to encounter such aid and assent in the higher echelons of Protestantism than on the immediate level of the community.

The situation I am describing adds up to an important new development in American interfaith relations. Jews still look to a significant segment of American Protestantism for a liberal lead, but they are more aware today that their problems are with Protestants as well as Catholics. Because American Jewry now, like the rest of the post-1865 immigration, is in its third generation, it too feels an unquestionable at-homeness in America. It is, therefore, increasingly free in its comment and action on the policies of both the other faiths: in the name of its own need for and commitment to *all* the protections of the First Amendment.

As we have seen, the First Amendment was the battleground, at the end of the 18th century, of a major transition in American society in which the old Protestant establishment was forced to yield to the newer ethos of Protestant non-conformity. Today in American society, we are witnessing a change perhaps as important—the full entry of the post-bellum immigrant groups into the national life. Though the battle once again seems to be raging around the First Amendment, it would appear from the foregoing analysis that the true issue is not the separation of church and state, but the symbolic significance for American life and culture of having a non-Protestant—whether he be a Catholic, a Jew, or an avowed atheist—as President of the United States.

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SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET

Some Statistics on Bigotry in Voting

THOUGH the outcome of the 1960 Presidential election will be determined by a variety of factors, it is clearly the "religious issue" which most fascinates the majority of our political commentators. For if Kennedy wins, the bigotry against Catholics (particularly Irish Catholics) that has flared up at different times in American history—in the Know-Nothing party of pre-Civil War days which secured over 25 per cent of the Presidential vote in 1856, in the notorious American Protective Association (APA) of the 1880's and 90's, and in the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's—will finally have been laid to rest, at least as a potent political force. More significantly, the highest office in the land will for the first time have been bestowed on someone who does not belong to the inner circle of Protestants of Nordic and Anglo-Saxon descent.

But if religion seems to be of major interest to the political analysts and to the churchmen, particularly evangelical Protestants, there is surprisingly little actual evidence that the "religious issue" will be decisive for the voters themselves. In many states (except, of course, the Southern) Americans have repeatedly elected Catholics and Jews to high office. Thus Catholics have held senatorships or governorships in—to give a partial listing—Alaska, California, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin, Maine, Washington, and Rhode Island. And since the 1930's, Jews have been elected to the office of governor and senator in Oregon, New York, Alaska, Connecticut, and Illinois. Granted that such office is not so important as the Presidency of the United States, one still would expect that people who feel strongly enough to vote against a Presidential candidate simply because of his religion would not knowingly vote for a Catholic or a Jew running for any major state office.

Two kinds of evidence are frequently cited to support the belief that the 1960 election may turn on the religious issue: the defeat of Al Smith in 1928 and the findings of various recent public opinion polls. Smith's defeat, of course, has usually been attributed to the strength of anti-Catholic feeling in the country. Yet, as Richard Hofstadter (among others) has pointed out, Smith received a *larger* vote in 1928 than the Democrats had been able to muster for twelve years—since the wartime re-election of Woodrow Wilson in 1916. Moreover, the average Democratic percentage of the national vote for the first seven Presidential elections in the 20th century was 39.4, or over one per cent *less* than the 40.8 that Smith secured in 1928. One should also keep in mind that the 1928 election was held in a period

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of relatively full employment, which permitted Herbert Hoover to claim Republican credit for the country's continued prosperity and personal credit for himself as the incumbent Secretary of Commerce (the Cabinet officer then most closely identified with economic well-being). Considering, thus, the factor of prosperity and the size of Smith's vote, it is possible to argue that Smith did as well or even better than one would have expected a Democrat to do in 1928, and perhaps also to argue that his religious affiliation, far from being responsible for his defeat, may have been an asset at the polls.

But what of the other evidence which has been cited to support the contention that religious bigotry defeated the Democrats in 1928—the fact, for example, that Smith lost a number of states in the presumably solid South? On this point, it should be noted that Smith actually lost border states, not (except for North Carolina) Southern ones, the same states which in later years were to vote against Adlai Stevenson—Florida, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. It is true that these states, as part of the solid South, had all voted Democratic in 1924, and that all, except Oklahoma and Tennessee, had also been Democratic in 1920, a year in which the Democrats, in a two-party race, secured only one-third of the national vote; obviously, Smith, in the Southern and border states, won much less than the normal Democratic vote. But this is only half the picture, for Smith made up for the loss in other parts of the country where he got, on the average, more votes than most of his 20th-century Democratic predecessors had. The question concerning Smith's Catholicism, therefore, is not how many votes it lost him in the border states, but how the electorate as a whole behaved in 1928.

A DETAILED—and unfortunately largely ignored—ecological study of the 1928 voting patterns by two sociologists, William Ogburn and Nell Talbot (*Social Forces,* December 1929), tells part of the story. Relating the 1928 voting returns of 123 randomly selected counties to various attributes of the populations—the proportions of foreign-born, of urban residents, of regular Democratic voters, of Catholics, and of "wet" voters—Ogburn and Talbot found that the most decisive correlate of the Presidential vote was not religion but *attitude toward prohibition.* (Smith, it will be recalled, was a wet.) The wet influence was measured by analyzing previous votes of counties on the prohibition issue in various referendums, and the influence of religion was measured by relating the vote to the proportions of Catholics in the counties studied. Though a correlation was discovered between Catholicism and votes for Smith, it was much lower than the correlation between the opposition to prohibition and voting for Al Smith.

The counties investigated by Ogburn and Talbot which yielded these particular results were counties of eight non-Southern states, but the same findings may help account for the Democratic defections in the South as well. The South was not only a center of nativist anti-Catholicism, it was also the stronghold of prohibition (Mississippi to this very day is dry). Given the fact that the major issue of 1928 was prohibition, with Smith advocating repeal and Hoover supporting retention, it is not surprising that Smith should have lost heavily in prohibitionist centers.

Smith's gains over his Democratic predecessors, on the other hand, came from the opponents of prohibition, people who were largely urban working-class and of recent immigrant background. But there is somewhat more to be said of the enthusiasm of these voters for the wet Smith. Their support of him was based *not only* on his opposition to prohibition and on his religion (since most Catholics were included among the wets), but also—as Samuel Lubell has pointed out—on his identification with economic reform and the further fact of his non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic origin.

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In other words, this group probably voted for Smith more heavily than it would have voted for a wet Democrat who was also an Anglo-Saxon Protestant. "What Smith really embodied," Lubell says, "was the revolt of the underdog, urban immigrant against the top dog of 'old American' stock. His Catholicism was an essential element in that revolt." In any case, there can be no doubt that the Republicans would have won against any Democratic candidate. The country in 1928 still preferred prosperity and the "noble experiment," and there is considerable room for doubt that anti-Catholicism was the determining factor in Smith's defeat.

THREE decades after Smith's defeat, the revived possibility of a Catholic nominee for President led the pollsters to investigate the connection between religious feeling and vote preference. As far back as the fall of 1958, the Gallup Poll asked a sample of the electorate: "If your party nominated a generally well-qualified person for President and he happened to be a Catholic, would you vote for him?" The question was also asked with respect to other groups—Jews, Baptists, Negroes, atheists, and women. Of all the categories asked about, including the Catholic, the atheists received the largest "No" proportion (75 per cent), and the Baptists the lowest (3 per cent). Over half the sample (53 per cent) said they would vote against a Negro, and antagonism to the idea of a female President (43 per cent) turned out to be much greater than to a Jew (28 per cent) or, most significantly for our purposes, to a Catholic (25 per cent). But of the *Protestants* interviewed—and this is the more crucial figure—34 per cent said they would not vote for a Catholic (or a Jew); of the Jews interviewed, only 6 per cent opposed the possibility of a Catholic President.

If these data told the whole story, those who fear that Kennedy will be defeated because of his religion would probably be proved right. However, a number of other variables must be considered. First, survey data suggest that Kennedy will secure the votes of at least three-quarters of the Catholic electorate—a group which now comprises over one-quarter of the total electorate, more than twice their proportion in Al Smith's day. Although in 1956 (according to the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan*) a majority of Catholics voted for Eisenhower, both party registration and response to polls questioning normal party allegiance show that the Catholic population during the Eisenhower era still retained its traditional identification with the Democratic party.† Without a powerful nonpartisan figure like Eisenhower to lure them into the Republican column, normally Democratic Catholics will have no reason to change their usual party allegiance in 1960. Catholic voters, moreover, were particularly concerned with the Communist issue during the 1950's, and many supported Eisenhower because they felt that his resistance to the Communist threat would be stronger than Stevenson's. But it is safe to say that Catholics who are still concerned about the Communist issue will trust Kennedy far more than they did Stevenson, and Nixon far less than they did Eisenhower.

Apart from all this, many Catholics have reported to the pollsters that they vote for Catholics *regardless* of party affiliation. When asked by Gallup, early in 1960, "If the party other than the one you normally vote for nominated a man for President in 1960 who happened to be a Catholic, do you think you might vote for him, or not?"—52 per cent of the Catholics answering said they might shift parties, and 37 per cent said they would not. But evidence that even more concretely indicates the propensity of Catho-

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* Angus Campbell *et al.*, *The American Voter* (John Wiley, 1960).

† According to Gallup, for example, early in 1960, 57 per cent of American Catholics called themselves Democrats, as against 18 per cent Republican and 25 per cent Independent.

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lics to support Catholic candidates, regardless of party, comes from the previously cited Michigan study of the 1956 elections; it found that in Congressional and Senatorial races "Catholic voters are quite willing to cross party lines to support a candidate of the same creed." Catholic voters were also interviewed before the 1956 election in a private survey (reportedly sponsored by John F. Kennedy) to determine whether a Catholic running as *President* or *Vice-President* would influence the vote one way or the other. According to Arthur Krock in the New York *Times,* this survey concluded that the numbers of the Democratic Catholics who had defected in 1952 but would return to a 1956 ticket which included a Catholic would be enough to shift 132 electoral votes to the Democratic side of the ledger. A recently published study of *The Catholic Vote** by a well-known political scientist, John H. Felton, based on a detailed investigation of six elections in different states from 1922 to 1960, comes to similar conclusions.

TODAY approximately 26 per cent of the American electorate is made up of Catholics and 4 per cent of Jews. The latter are normally even more heavily committed to the Democrats than are the Catholics. (Early in 1960, 66 per cent described themselves as Democrats, while only 9 per cent were willing to own up to a Republican identification. In the 1956 elections over three-quarters of the Jews voted for Stevenson.) Although there is considerable dislike for Kennedy's father among many Jewish voters, all the available post-convention survey data suggest that the Democratic proportion of the Jewish electorate should be at least as high as it was when Eisenhower headed the Republican ticket. Thus, the two major non-Protestant religious groups who together comprise 30 per cent of the voters should give between 75 and 80 per cent of their vote to Senator Kennedy. And this non-Protestant group is even more important than the percentages indicate, for it is concentrated in densely populated states which by themselves constitute close to a majority of the electoral votes.

As Peter Odegard has pointed out in his *Religion and Politics,*† "over 80 per cent of American Roman Catholics are to be found in less than a dozen states." Considerably more than 30 per cent of the population of eight politically potent states —New York, New Jersey, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut—is made up of Catholics and Jews. Furthermore, the Northern Negroes who gave the Democratic ticket a large majority (about 80 per cent)—even against Eisenhower—are also concentrated in most of the same cities. Although Nixon is making valiant efforts to break this majority down, and some prominent Negroes such as Jackie Robinson have endorsed him, the organizations and leaders most involved in the struggle for civil rights are still behind the Democrats, and therefore, as surveys indicate, the Negroes are sure to remain a bulwark of the Democratic vote in the North.

If, then—as seems likely from the available data—Kennedy should receive majorities of from 75 to 80 per cent among Catholics, Jews, and Negroes, he could win the election with as little as 35–40 per cent of the white Protestant vote. This means that he could afford the defection (largely in the South) of 3–8 per cent of the 43 per cent of the white Protestants who call themselves Democrats, even in the impossible event that he did not receive a single vote from the 21 per cent who call themselves Independent, or the 36 per cent who identify with the Republicans.

But can we estimate how much of this white Protestant vote Kennedy will lose? As I have noted, considerable antagonism to a Catholic candidate for President was expressed by one-third of the Protestants

* The Hauser Press (1960).

† Oceana Publications (1960).

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interviewed in various Gallup surveys—and undoubtedly others were inhibited from admitting a religious prejudice to an interviewer. On the other hand, Gallup also found that Protestants are less interested than are Catholics in the outcome of the 1960 race (a fact which may reflect the lesser emotional involvement of the majority group), while the Michigan study indicates that in general Catholics as a group are much more prone to vote than Protestants. The investigations by Felton mentioned earlier also show that in election contests between Protestants and Catholics outside of the South, Protestants "are not as inclined [as Catholics] to discriminate with their ballots on the basis of religion." He reports further that his statistical findings jibe with "more impressionistic observations derived from political leaders in such states as Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Maryland, and Massachusetts."

A further point ought to be raised in connection with the Protestant vote. As has already been indicated, more Protestants think of themselves as Democrats than as Republicans (though the committed Democrats among them—43 per cent—are in a minority of the total group, which includes 36 per cent Republicans and 21 per cent Independents). Class background for Protestants, in addition, is a more important factor in party allegiance than for Catholics or Jews—the majority of the Protestant workers are Democrats, the middle-class and well-to-do are preponderantly Republican. Thus, since poorer and less educated Protestants are more likely to be vigorously anti-Catholic, the election may turn on the relative strength of their religious and class prejudices, for many of these poorer Protestants will have to choose between two sets of attitudes—their opposition to the Republicans as the party of the well-to-do, and their antagonism to John Kennedy as a Catholic. When entering the ballot box, many voters are faced—wittingly or not—with the need to choose among conflicting prejudices, and it often turns out that they prefer a *Democratic* Catholic to a *Protestant* Republican, or the other way around. Since a man's ethnic origin is only one of the many factors which determine how the voters will react to him, in the case of the poorer Protestants, a goodly number are likely to find the idea of voting for a Republican more repugnant than voting for a Catholic.

In general, then, one can safely predict that Kennedy will not lose the election because he is a Catholic, that indeed, if the religious issue has any effect at all, it will be to add to his chances of winning an Electoral College majority.

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BENJAMIN DE MOTT

Looking for Intelligence in Washington

WHAT stands in the way of a reinvigoration of national purpose? Who opposes the invention of an active, responsible future for America? A thousand answers have already been returned to these questions—luxury, complacency, stupidity, the old guard, the new desire to be left alone, and so many more that teasing the whole catechism has now become fashionable fun in elite journals. The case is, though, that one, huge and possibly crucial barrier—the national conviction of the impotence of power—is rarely named in the catalogue. And nowhere are the damaging consequences of the omission more evident than in the capital itself.

To say this is not to imply that the conviction in question is a local phenomenon. No pollster's survey is required to confirm that people everywhere, at all levels of life, have made "satisfactory adjustments," have found ways of controlling the desperate awareness of personal helplessness (by renaming it "maturity," "disinterestedness," or "sophistication"), have learned to half-live with the most intolerable and deeply lodged suspicion of the times: namely, *that events and individuals are unreal, and that power to alter the course of the age, of my life and your life, is actually vested nowhere.* Small signs of disbelief in authority are visible in all of Washington's sanctified places: messengers dressed in Presley hoodlumesque swagger contemptuously in and out of Senate committee rooms while hearings are in progress, dumping papers on desks, interrupting witnesses—without reprimand. The Senate side of the Capitol, during the special Congressional session just concluded, shook with worshippers of leaders as "Names" (personalities to be glimpsed by non-personalities): hordes of fat ladies in shorts and squealing girls in pedal-pushers shouting in the corridors for the candidates' autographs, battling with policemen. But taken alone this behavior hardly counts. What matters is that analogues to it are multiplying ceaselessly at all levels of power, as authority itself—not tourists, hired hands, or sensation-seekers—makes adjustments of its own to the universal descent into unreality.

As Congress returned in August, the military was assembling for an annual meeting at the old Wardman Park. (The sponsoring organization was the Association of the U. S. Army, or, as the group's telephone voice says in response to calls, the "USA.") The meeting was no insignificant occasion. In the lobbies and on the grounds of the hotel a hundred industrial exhibitors displayed equipment now in production for the armed forces. "Army spokesmen" revealed plans for self-renovation that included infantry divisions capable of commuting to the ashpits by

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helicopter. "Military intellectuals," James Gavin, Robert Lovett, and others, participated in the exercises; the academic apparatus of papers, discussants, and the like was in use throughout the convention; and the presence on the program of figures like "Dr. Morrough P. O'Brien, Dean Emeritus, College of Engineering, University of California" strengthened, in print, the impression that sober inquiry was in progress.

On the scene the impression was (predictably) different. The exhibitors had rented scores of suites where drink was served around the clock in abundance rare at ordinary conventions and productive of troubling scenes—among them, a group of thick-voiced colonels blinking at 11 A. M. before a closed circuit color TV in the press room which carried the homely words and mien of Secretary Brucker. The likeness between the behavior of the assembling "friends of the army," and that of conventioneering salesmen had from the first slightly more than passing interest even for an observer schooled by *The Power Elite*. Like a message from a sales manager instructing his force to take special note of new lines and devices to boost volume, the program of the affair exhorted guests to "Visit Industrial Exhibits"; at the exhibits as well as in the "hospitality rooms" high-ranking officers in mufti were distinguishable from corporation representatives only by symbols on lapel badges. The impression, that of an effort to reconstitute the military establishment as a minor affiliate of a sound, routinely on-going industrial giant, was intensified by the language of the official papers. General George W. Power, Director of Developments at the Pentagon, favored the vocabulary of the "product personalizer," speaking of "the members of our multi-purpose family of tanks." Another powerful voice declared that there has been "a great advance in funding this year" for gas slaughter ("chemical warfare"), and that the Iroquois helicopter has extraordinary "growth potential." Summarizing a group of papers, Lieutenant General Trudeau announced, in the style of the hard-hitting experienced sales executive, that we seek to retain "the heavyweight championship of the world."

The tendency toward high abstraction evident in these snippets can be regarded positively—as a sign of delicate feeling about the planning of mass murder. But corroborative evidence of such feeling was nowhere detected. The gap between word and thing seemed related only to the self-definitions of the principals: as middling-high-rank executives, men with responsibility for research, production, and consumption in but one branch of "a remarkably diversified operation." A true map of the imagination of these men of command appeared unlikely to show images of or attitudes toward war, only sites and cycles, partial glimpses of The Universal Plant. The latter was running, its hum could be felt everywhere in the land. This year it had produced so much "potential." Next year, more. No one was its master, all were its servants, some adjusted its schedules, no one could turn it off. And indeed why would such action even be contemplated? What was produced after all was a family, tens of millions of jobs, technical advance, the future itself.

CONVENTIONS are conventions, of course: this one was held to dazzle an audience, and represented an immersion in military immediacy. Like most "establishments," the military seeks to shape attitudes of final command in private retreats rather than in public view—in, for example, the Graduate School that is called "the government's highest educational institution"—the National War College at Fort McNair. Each year a hundred-odd army and air force colonels and navy captains are assigned to the College for a year—since 91.6 per cent of these men shortly thereafter become generals or admirals, it seems safe at first glance to conclude that the recent experience of the

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high command is not limited to the rhetoric of the appropriations hunt or the sales convention. Fort McNair is in the District, but it is located somewhat back out of all this in the southwest section. The parade grounds before the College have been turned into practice golf holes; the grounds are lined on one side by brick, white-columned "miniature mansions" (each bears a sign naming its tenant: General X, General Y, Admiral Z, etc.), and on the other by less elegant quarters for less elegant folk; the quality of the place is unworldly, old-Southern—a likely setting for a reflective encounter with complicated realities, and for an achievement of independent selfhood.

But a setting, as is known, is not enough. "The basic purpose of the curriculum," said the catalogue, "is the encouragement of intellectural [*sic*] curiosity and original thinking" about "those military, economic, scientific, political, psychological and social factors of power potential. . . ." The College has no teachers, only a series of topics on which four lectures are given weekly—by ambassadors, generals, Senators, professors, or famous visitors from abroad. Most of the college day is spent in "discussion," a good means, as the adjutant reported, of "getting to know one another." (The rooms in which discussion takes place are fitted out with an executive desk and swivel chair for each student.) The only individual written work for the year consists of one 25-page "Research Paper." (Individual Research Papers are expected to measure up . . . to the standards of graduate work. A simple chronological narrative or enumeration of 'facts' will not meet this requirement. Personal conclusions and interpretations . . . are expected.") The library that provides source material for these papers is rich in military documents, extremely weak in social science, and (naturally) a blank in the humanities. (There is a bookshop in the College, but the only titles on sale here as the new class entered in August were the College Outline series, Winston Churchill's histories, and six copies of *Advise and Consent.*) The classes are offered reading lists which are "normally of such length that the members . . . can complete them in from one to two hours"; the lists are prepared in part by the college librarians. One topic on last year's academic program was called "The National Estimate of the Situation." Its sub-topics were: "World Politics, Economics, Geopolitics, Military Strategy, and Social, Cultural and Psychological" [*sic*]. The official Course Bibliography named sixteen items useful for "detailed study" of psychological, cultural, and social factors that are relevant to estimates of the present situation of this country. Among them were works by Emmet Hughes of Time Inc. and William Buckley of *The National Review,* two items directly from *Fortune,* five books about Russian Communism and a pamphlet about "tensions" and "internal pressures" in China scraped up by the Library of Congress at the request of a reactionary Republican Senator, an anthology put together at Notre Dame called *What America Stands For,* a manual about psychological warfare, Clinton Rossiter's *Conservatism in America* (described as "an excellent guide to the development and revival of conservatism in American political thought"), and an article by "Harold B. Wess" in *Human Events* called "We Can't Have Freedom Without Capitalism."

OBVIOUSLY, perusal of this and other pages in the bibliography, together with a glance at the procedures of the institution itself, discourages belief that the place is a precise antithesis to bourbon and hotel back-slapping. The standards appeared to be significantly below those of "graduate work" and the library was ill-equipped to support their elevation. But what is of greater consequence is that the school did appear to constitute to the shaping of the new sense of the military self spoken of before. The stance of the manufacturing executive cannot be named in a

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phrase, but clearly among the titles cited above there is nothing that would offend it. Reading of the kind listed directs a man toward a view of the country as a place momentarily set off its track by soft liberals and statists, but presently returning (in a sort of impersonal cycle) to the basic conservative values that are the true key to the whiteness of our nature. What are the concomitants of this vision? Disbelief in the reality of those voices who claim that values held in common with The Enemy are increasing among us; disbelief that anyone could seriously interest himself in disarmament; obliviousness to the signs that America has been powerless to stand against the drift toward more complicated social and economic organization, belief in the irrevocability of events. There are contradictions here, to be sure, but they are of the sort that the middle-level executive has learned to endure, has found methods of adjusting to on his own.

Whether these methods are also adopted by the military is uncertain. But it is plain that men of military power are in some sense pointed by their highest training toward a redefinition of themselves as middle-level executives. The outer signs of blurred identity include, in addition to the imitation of business tone, a manner of placidity: the achieved accommodation simultaneously banishes crisis as reality and restores it as an "aspect" of the grand incomprehensible system. But the most important effect of the redefinition is the hastening of military abdication from responsibility for the direction of military planning. Who am I? says the lieutenant general, unable to recall the style of the lost, spikily independent military self. I am not a maker of events but a remover of obstructions. For progress' sake, and in acknowledgment of the insuperable uncontrollability of "forces," I march with affairs—and am in truth hardly a man of war at all. Patron of industry? supporter of research? Even these titles imply an improper separation from the huge machine that encompasses all. I am simply "of the community," and in the service of things as they are.

Points of contact are numerous between this military mode of adjustment and that of non-military authority. The highest levels of the civilian bureaucracy do not conceive of the march of events either as more manageable or as less beneficent than does the military. But there is this difference: civilian needs for a pattern are satisfied not by an image (of an endlessly productive machine), but by a law. The law is that of the Inevitability of Progress.

The style of speech of the figures in question resembles that of the sunny philosopher—the man whose consciousness of his own liberal dedication requires him to invent a substitute reality to stand in place of the seen ugliness. There have been no alterations for the worse, says his smile; no increase in tawdriness, no moral or intellectual change—except for the better. Having re-created outer experience in this fashion, he is in position to re-create himself—as one whose own essence is remote from his role. Thus a minister of culture asserts self-deprecatingly an identity between himself and the wholly uneducated consumer of art. Mr. Arthur Flemming, the present, well-regarded Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, represents just such a stance. Asked his reaction to allusions to the weakening of our moral standards (President Hoover) as well as to the slippage in our intellectual strength (Senator Kennedy), to observations on "the decline of American culture," and on the "coarsening of American taste," Secretary Flemming responded that these were "catch phrases" used by people who "want to write pessimistic articles." A moment later, after speaking of the "sharp step-up in sales" of classical records and serious paperbacks, the Secretary (he is the American equivalent of André Malraux) spoke enthusiastically of his membership in the new *Reader's Digest* Record Club.

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A feeling for Progress as that which rules contemporary experience, and the sense of the individual as at bottom only another of the consuming millions, are less common in bureaucratic echelons just below the highest. Here the refuge from disquieting reality and from moral complication is neutrality and professionalism; pride in the pursuit of a higher team efficiency is substituted for scrutiny of policy and understanding of role. The pattern appears most vividly among figures employed in recouping the losses in prestige of Western ideals, specialists in the art of idea-seeding. A director of research and planning at United States Information Service speaks positively of "survey techniques" developed abroad by market research organizations operating on government contract. These organizations, he says, succeed splendidly in ferreting out "images of America," in defining foreign aspirations, in revealing fruitful ways of altering opinions in remote lands. But "we need more avenues of communication studies." How is information passed in Laos? what voices do these people trust? "More work must be done."

To talk with such officials is to be struck not only by their professional feeling for the delicacy of "the factors"—but by the absence in them of reflection on the paradox that what is to be instilled by psychological manipulation is a taste for freedom and a distaste for the manipulative state. The worker in this field lives daily with the subtlest problems of dry war; in theory his is the most sharply focused awareness of the mixed virtues and vices that now engage in world contest. But the self-definition implicit in his speech—that of the expert who speaks neutrally of "the heavy-handedness of Communist technique"—represents still another abdication from commitment.

His counterpart on Capitol Hill is of course the Committee Chairman who re-defines himself as a practical proceduralist. The day that Secretary Flemming was acclaiming the resurgence of American interest in serious music, two representatives of the musicians' union were telling a subcommittee of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee that the art of music might soon die out in America. The subcommittee was investigating TV fraud. It was represented in the hearing room by one man, its chairman, Senator Pastore of Rhode Island. The union officials spent a portion of their time objecting to the unannounced use of canned music, but the chief ground of their complaint was the irresponsibility of people who own TV franchises. The latter are pledged to contribute to cultural life, the living arts of the community, said the union men, yet they contribute nothing. The Committee is investigating fraud in broadcasting: is this not a fraud?

Senatore Pastore, a neat, tiny man with slickly combed hair and bright eyes and teeth, smiled sympathetically at the speakers. "That's a panoramic subject," he began. "It deserves a tremendous amount of consideration and study," a genuinely *"academic"* inquiry. The Senator wished to be frank. He knew the situation. Everyone wants his children to take piano lessons and then if the children learn, they regrettably cannot find jobs. But this was not the place to take up such a subject. The subcommittee's concern was limited, it was *fraud*. The union men should pursue their ideas elsewhere. They had brought their ideas into the daylight, the Senator agreed with them. But, he added, still smiling, "You're practical men or you wouldn't be where you are." And as practical men, did not the union officials respect sound procedure, rules of germaneness? There was a moment or two of further protest, another cluster of expressions of sympathy. Then the officials left, and the subcommittee returned to its proper business.

Nothing in the exchange was obscure. Committee responsibilities are carefully defined; sin is various; and unquestionably Senator Pastore, a liberal Democrat,

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was himself convinced that people who, in exchange for valuable property, pledge themselves to support the arts, ought to be held to their pledge. Yet the pledge and the implications of its discard were not real—they were rumors, intimations that could only be made real as frauds by the newspaper din that created quiz show turpitude as an entity. The rueful legislator adjusted to the suspicion of Congressional impotency by seeing the most obvious fraud as the least obvious, and by establishing himself not as an overseer of the quality of American life but as a parliamentarian. In the latter role he could create substance out of rules of procedure. Substance lay in the question: have all the applicants for the right to broadcast seven prime hours of violence been fairly treated? Irreality lay in the question: does any such right exist? The audience followed the colloquy with ease. Indeed, so effective a mode of adjustment to the conviction of powerlessness was this appeal to parliamentary practicality that the figures who raised the "ungermane" question ended by grinning shamefacedly at their folly, as though they were in fact mere tricksters.*

As THE example suggests, the styles of adjustment in legislative committees to the torment of non-being are numberless. It is possible for the legislator to characterize himself—in extenuation of inability to act—as a mere tourist of government; it is possible for him to gain a sudden sense of personal reality as a force, a lawmaker, a controller of large events, by flamboyantly identifying himself with some witness who does possess power to control minor events. At one moment during the recent session of Congress these gestures were made simultaneously. The occasion was a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee on agency requests for emergency funds. The applicants of the day were modest, slow-spoken men from the Forest Service. They were in need of a few hundred thousand dollars to pay for summer re-seeding of burned-over areas; unless the seeding were done at once there was danger of mudflows, floods. The case presented was entirely sound, but in the eagerness of the Senators to hear it more fully and yet more, to record satisfaction and praise, a touch of pathos appeared. Time and again the Forest Service men repeated that "basically an accumulation of moisture deficiency" was responsible for this year's fire season, and only at the end—at the repeated urging of Senators Dworshak and Kuchel, searching for "sabotage"—did we allow that "we think in a few cases arson was a factor." But by then the fiddles were tuned, arias prepared. Could the Foresters not use more money than they asked for? Had they thought of including a request for a little pocket money in their budget? They already had several hundred thousand for emergencies? Well, it was not enough, was it? Senator Stennis leaned back fondly, recalled his visit to the fire-jumpers—the helicoptering firefighters who protect the national forests. "Happiest crowd I ever saw." The Senator had eaten with them. He had flown with them. He had not jumped with them. Chuckles. He commended them highly. He understood that the Air Force had adopted some of their jumping techniques. All in all, the Senator said, rising to a peak of boyish pleasure at the memory—a splendid toy, a sound investment! why is nothing else so sensibly, palpably *there?*—all in all, "I don't know anything connected with the government that ever impressed me more than those fire-jumpers."

At this moment the legislator showed himself as The Observer, the tourist of governmental great sights; but he was, in addition, a man adjusting to his sense of the uncontrollability of large events by identifying himself with those who *can* plant piney woods. Such ritual participa-

* There is an intelligent commentary on FCC evasion of "questions of taste" by Irving Kristol in the August 1960 issue of *Encounter*.

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tion does not bring seasons to life in the capital but fitfully it can stir in the legislator a sudden sense of sway: for an instant the horses of night are checked. Sadly, though, the Foresters cannot be kept all afternoon, and ahead lies more of the unmanageable—and how many projects of virtue can show for themselves things so lovely as trees?

THE MEN in Washington whose task in part is to criticize partial intelligence and evasive self-definition are of course the journalists. Much is done in the city to inspire them with a conviction of their significance. The physical arrangements made for the press in the Capitol itself are not luxurious (nothing in the building qualifies as that), but they are on a par with those made for the ordinary legislator. Moreover, the situation of the press in both chambers—directly above the presiding officer, with the only front view available in the galleries—tends to strengthen the journalist's view of himself as the key member of the audience. And there are further reasons for him to believe in himself as a political and social force. He is under constant solicitation from legislators. The press galleries are piled high with Congressional news releases—efforts (to be accepted or rejected) to win attention for one or another claim; and the efforts are often made in person. (During the August session Senator Dirksen either came directly to the gallery itself after the meetings of his policy planning group, or invited reporters into the private dining room where the group had met. Senator Lyndon Johnson admitted reporters to his desk on the floor of the Senate each morning before the day's work began.) The Chief Executive himself frequently responds to a question by praising the journalist for his contribution and promising to act upon it ("Yes, Mr. Reston, I didn't think of it in those same terms. But you have put a thought in my head, and I am going to look and see whether something of this kind could be done"). And there is at least one editor in the capital, Alfred Friendly of the Washington *Post,* who, by encouraging his staff to read widely and to pursue training in graduate seminars and elsewhere, in effect undertakes to persuade his reporters to regard themselves as minds of influence on the course of events.

There is too little evidence, however, that such persuasion is heeded: the typical reporter views himself as a victim rather than an influence. He is, true, quick to express impatience with leaders who make him wait. (One August noon reporters gathered outside the Kennedy-Johnson partition in the Senate wing in the belief that a press conference was scheduled for 12:45 P.M. At 12:50 two of their number, with the approval of the others, pounded heavily and angrily on the door to summon the tardy candidates.) He enjoys speaking and writing of legislators in tones that express his lack of awe. (The Senator whom fifty reporters in a poll chose as the ablest man in the chamber is referred to in print, patronizingly, as "Lyndon" by the chief of the Washington Bureau of the New York *Times;* Press Club gossip centers on the domestic lives of the better-known legislators; vacationing journalists congratulate themselves for "escaping" from politicians.) But the impatience and lack of awe reflect not a conviction of personal dignity and influence, but, instead, of self-contempt—the inevitable response of men whose livelihoods require them to claim large significance for leaders and events that in their deepest view do not possess it.

Signs of this definition of the journalistic self as victim are not kept from sight. The reporter is eager to dissociate himself from those who rank legislators high in the scales of American life. He is inclined to piety before all bookish types, and regards it as a badge of purity that his sympathy with non-political men is greater than that which he has for Senators or Cabinet members or Assistant

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Secretaries. His jokes characteristically turn on a display of doubt in the seriousness of undertakings that engage a politician's attention. (Told that Senator Kennedy would talk with the Ghana Minister of Finance who was seeking commitments for a multi-million-dollar River Project loan, a reporter leaned over the Committee desk dourly to ask: "Is he going to borrow it from Kennedy?") And his vision of any dramatic event in which legislators figure is reductive, and rests entirely on the assumption that discovering political significance requires only the act of asking and answering the question: how will all this affect the election?

One example: the opening day of the post-conventions session the situation of the Majority Leader, Senator Johnson, was of remarkable dramatic interest. A sensitive man, given to lapses into mute anger, displays of strong feeling, and pettishness, Senator Johnson stands at the top of the celebrated hierarchy of the Senate. (Newer men, like Harrison Williams or Prouty of Vermont, break off in mid-sentence when the Majority Leader rises to speak while they have the floor.) He had obviously allowed himself more than a passing hope at Los Angeles, and he had returned defeated by a colleague who had only quite recently lifted himself from the levels of condescension. The Senator's manner of response to this situation was extraordinary. He seemed not to invite the opposition into snappish quarrels with him but to demand their anger, as he swung back and forth on the step by his chair. He was heedless of Senator Kennedy far behind him at his back bench, heedless of taunts about the "Majority Leader's Leader," about the possibility that "he had not gotten the word yet." With wit, verve, ironic command, and a near physical force expressed in wide, large-bodied gestures, he dealt with a whole series of objections and complaints. What was clearly behind the performance was an impulse toward mastery of humiliation—an impulse that acted itself out with extreme success. The man resumed his position a notch higher, as it were, established his place and power freshly in a small psychodrama of intense interest; nor was the place seriously challenged thereafter. The "political implications" of the performance—and of the complicated tactics worked out by the two Democratic candidates in succeeding days to guarantee each other's dignity—are considerable. To pursue them is to arrive at an intuition of a possible executive-legislative relationship in years to come, should the Democrats win, as well as at an estimate of the imagination and subtlety of character of the principals. But the psychodrama and its aftermath were worth not a word even to the best reporters, men with time for reflection. What mattered, according to the lead of as intelligent a correspondent as James Reston, was that "Lyndon Johnson of Texas is obviously going to be a rough customer in this Presidential campaign." Before every band of discontented farmers, Reston wrote, "there will be Lyndon with his prodigious memory for convenient facts and his mock sadness for Ezra Benson." Thus does human, and perhaps even political, reality evaporate.

A label for the symptoms exhibited by journalists is provided by Senator Clark of Pennsylvania, who recently complained of a "mounting cynicism in the press with respect to everyone in public life." But that label is in more than one respect misleading. The tides of wanness and self-contempt that flow in the press galleries are not symbols of world-weariness or of the conviction that Senators and Representatives are figures of corruption. They merely testify once again to the atrophy of belief in power, the casting off the "illusion" that men elected to national office will ever possess means of creating significance, of acting in consequential fashion, of turning the conscience of the time.

As the account of committee hearings

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above indicates, signs of this atrophy are readily discernible in the behavior of legislators themselves. The reporter who cannot believe in the significance of what he sees and hears in debate, open hearings, interviews with leaders, shares an intuition with the principals of these occasions. This is not to say that the political leader is indistinguishable in nature or bearing from the bureaucratic technician described above. The latter, a man of close-clipped gray hair, keen but accepting eyes, slow grammatical speech, an academic air coupled with excellent manners and a pipe, is often a figure seemingly incomplete, juiceless, over-restrained; he does not serve as the Type of the successful politician. There are Congressional figures of immense physical vibrancy—Senator Humphrey; of impressive ascetic quality—Senator Mansfield; of striking personal dignity—Senator Douglas; and there are also men, contrary to general assumption, who are not only willing to listen to the pejorative word but to say one themselves. (Senator Fulbright worked up a recent speech from an article in *Dissent* demolishing a kitsch best seller about American diplomats, and has allowed himself publicly to declare his interest in a professor's claim that 80 per cent of the undergraduates of America should be sent down and re-educated to the point at which they become available for instruction.)

But the legislative chambers as a whole are not now dominated by figures of commitment. The sense of positive disagreement, measured hostility, is rarely transmitted in either the House or the Senate. A note of irritation heard in a legislator's voice invariably signals "merely personal" antipathy. Unquestionably the reluctance of legislators to hone the edges of their difference from each other has bearing on journalistic disbelief in the existence of issues. But its significance runs deeper than that. The man whose gestures of partisanship are accompanied by winks and teasing reductive smiles means finally to assert his awareness that all subjects before him, all possible decisions, amount only to spray thrown aloft by the terrific, patternless surf of the age.

It is customary to interpret this as evidence that the manners of modest gentlemen are still in vogue in Congress; or as an indication that elected representatives function as a whole body of intelligence and do not arbitrarily separate themselves from each other because of political affiliation. But such a reading obscures the truth that social union is achieved *at the expense of belief in the official role,* and that it requires a descent from responsibility, a redefinition of all leaders as followers, all heroes as clubmen, all tribunals as refuges. The first task for the new Senator is to come to an understanding of these implications of his society—to unlearn, as it were, his conviction of potency, to grasp that the *Record* is read, not made. There are various tones and roles that he may choose—The Simple Man, The Bewildered Questioner, the Competent Expositor, The Wit, The Busy Foreman, The Fifty-Year-Old Boy—but the range is too narrow to include the voice of the man who believes in his own capacity to alter the course of things. To be sure, the right to use this voice is not absolutely denied. The Senator is allowed moments of rhetorical fervor, he is privileged to duel in mock outrage with mock insult. But the rule under which indignation—the voice of the roused man who will act, who hereby declares himself—is tolerated in that it make itself recognizable as a guise, an actor's ploy. For any speech not delivered solely for the *Record* (in a mumble), the correct voice is that of a man who does not stand with the whole of himself behind his words, who an instant after his tongue is silent, his "passion" spent, is to be seen crossing the well of the chamber to a grinning opposition colleague whom he greets with a carefully composed shrug: "You look lonely over here. . . ." As is well known, the vulgar

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complaint is that all politicians are bad actors. But the present meaning of the unproficiency is different from that implicit in the familiar jokes. Self-conscious thespianship today stands as the chief legislative resource, the principal mode of adjustment to personal meaninglessness. The legislator controls his lack of faith in his sway first by a public manner of boundless assurance, then by making a kind of play of his desire for reality and force, stepping "into" the role of the influence at intervals, as though actually the part belonged to someone else. The play enables him to escape from the blankness of the insignificance he feels into, for a minute, the garb of the true Senator of the State. But there is always a return, as indicated—to that inconsequence and disbelief which has become the daily norm of authority itself.

As is obvious, a change of administration will not alter the conceptions of reality and self of the highly placed men of non-power. The conviction that the tide of things as they are and must be is infinitely more than the person, and that individual potency is beyond hope—this resides at a level of consciousness different from that which knows of Republicans and Democrats or takes in talk from either side about the recovery of serious intellectual purpose.* To shake the conviction the candidates would have to define themselves not as candidates—figures whose identity rests in a more intense, more reasoned caution than is elsewhere the rule—but as free leaders, masters of ideas and situations rather than men waiting before a slot machine for the gum to drop. And not even the "heroic" Mr. Rockefeller (as Dennis Wrong pointed out in these pages last month) was able to see himself in such terms.

The truth is that no single "method" of altering the consciousness of authority (itself a symptom of the general condition of a culture) can be proposed. For the present, the limits of sound hope have been clearly specified by men who have given themselves to visions of renewal—by Paul Douglas, for example, who in conversation speaks of the possibility of a "cyclical" re-appearance of committed intelligence in government, or by Robert Nathan, veteran Washington economist, who speaks of the possibility of an emergent passion in the next Chief Executive. And it is unreasonable to expect a more radical change in the foreseeable future.

Yet it does not follow from all this that there is no lesson to be drawn or profit to be gained from clear awareness of the conditions of the present movement. The lesson is simply that even limited hopes like those of Douglas and Nathan cannot possibly thrive in air thinned and sanitized by terror of a belief in the potency of power, or among leaders who omit from their register of obstacles to national revitalization all mention of that terror and its relation to the continuous ineluctable erosion of life itself.

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* The talk is as yet unconvincing at any level. "The New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises—it is a set of challenges . . . it holds out the promise of more sacrifice, instead of more security"—in these words of Senator Kennedy more than one person seemed to detect (for better or worse) an allusion to Professor Galbraith. Questioned on the connection, Professor Cox retorted bluntly: "That's a mistake." Another "spokesman," who preferred to be nameless, explained the statement as follows: "Sacrifice is just Jack Kennedy's asceticism, pure Kennedy. He smokes anything, never has any money in his pockets, he isn't a boozer, he leads a very simple life. . . ." As for the opposite camp: it glances a shade too opportunistically at a possible role as the emancipator of the Midwestern professor, the voice of the "underprivileged" academic. The Vice President let it fall to his group of academic advisors (the man who repeated the words was the president of Parsons College in Iowa) that many non-Ivy League professors never get a nationwide hearing for their ideas—which is surely the truth, but a secondary truth, less than an idea or a theme. Conversation about ideas with Kennedy's staff assistants is, true, conversation about books, about particular notions; conversation about ideas with Nixon's staff is conversation about Nixon's "way of working," his desire to "get all points of view," and it is carried on over coffee served in a mug bearing the legend "Stan's Guest." But it is as yet not plain that one side is significantly less operational than the other in its view of knowledge.

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EMIL L. FACKENHEIM

The Dilemma of Liberal Judaism

THE liberal Jew of today is in a dilemma. His Jewish conscience urges him to look for an authority which might guide and direct his Jewish life. But his liberal conscience frowns on that desire, as a temptation to be resisted. As a Jew he fears that, unless individuals such as himself accept an authority, there will soon be an end to Judaism. But as a liberal he fears that, should they in fact accept it, there will soon be an end to liberalism. These fears and doubts confront him with the possibility that he might in the end have to choose between his Judaism and his liberalism; that, as critics on both right and left have charged all along, liberal Judaism is a contradiction in terms.

If this dilemma, latently present ever since the rise of liberal Judaism, is becoming open and manifest in our time, it is because of three main conclusions toward which the conscientious liberal Jew is more and more ineluctably driven. Gone are the days when one could arbitrarily pick and choose from the Jewish past and persuade oneself that one's selection was Judaism. The selections have been too many and too varied, and too apt to reflect less the spirit of Judaism than that of those who selected from it, or that of their age or their class. If the liberal's Jewish life is to have a claim to authenticity, then, there must be a sense in which the Jewish past has authority. This is the first conclusion.

The second is a corollary of the first. Arbitrary picking and choosing may be done by the learned and the unlearned alike. But genuine contact with the past is possible, if at all, only through learning and scholarship. Hence if there is a sense in which the Jewish past has authority for the liberal Jew, there is also a sense in which Jewish learning has such authority. The views of the learned and those of the unlearned cannot carry equal weight; they can approach equality only as the unlearned themselves take steps to become learned.

The third conclusion is the deepest and hardest of all. Indeed, it is so deep and hard that, although it is well-nigh inescapable, the desire to escape from it is stubborn and widespread. If the Jewish past is to have authority for the liberal Jew, then this past cannot be a merely human past, however great. A merely human past could obligate the liberal Jew, if at all, only as a man; and the Jewish part of it, perhaps to a greater degree than other parts, but not differently in

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kind.* If Judaism is to continue to exist, there must be a sense in which the Jewish past has an altogether unique authority for the liberal Jew. But this is possible only if what speaks to him through it is not merely the voice of man but the voice of God. The third conclusion, then, toward which the liberal Jew is more and more ineluctably driven is that Judaism is not a purely human product: that it is, after all, a covenant between Israel and God. Hence he stands under still another authority, and this is the highest, of which indeed the other two are but means and instruments: the authority of God.

These conclusions, we say, are becoming increasingly inescapable for the serious liberal Jew. But because he is a liberal, he also finds them all but unacceptable. For they seem radically incompatible with that intellectual and spiritual freedom the exercise of which he considers both his right and his duty. As he sees his duty, he must criticize the past, not accept its authority; and he must criticize it in the light of standards which are modern and contemporary. It is by virtue of criticism that he sees the present to have progressed beyond the past; and to desist from such criticism and accept past authority would be, in his view, to betray his liberal conscience and lapse into reaction.

Liberal conscience, then, seems to rule out the authority of the past. It also seems to rule out the authority of learning and scholarship. A free believer must think for himself. He cannot be free if another thinks on his behalf. In the sphere of spiritual life, inferior thoughts which are the individual's own are better than superior thoughts which are not—simply because they *are* his own. How then can the authority of learning be acceptable? Hillel maintained that the ignorant cannot be pious.† To the liberal, these are hard and indeed intolerable words.

But the hardest authority for the liberal is not that of the past or of learning but that of God. Whether the divine word comes through the mouth of a prophet or a sacred writing or even through his own heart, he cannot, he feels, simply subject his conscience to it. He cannot but weigh that word against his own conscience; and in the end it must be *his* conscience and *his* judgment which are his authority, not a God other than they who legislates to them. If indeed there should be such a thing as revelation, it cannot be a voice *other* than the voice within. It must be identical with it. The voice of conscience, or of free thought, or of religious experience, must be the voice of God.

IN AN attempt to cope with the dilemma of the liberal Jew, our first task must be to consider more closely the concept of freedom which gives rise to it. That concept first achieved prominence in the Age of Enlightenment, and it has pervaded Western consciousness ever since.

It is well defined by Immanuel Kant. "Enlightenment," Kant writes, "is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage."

In Kant's account, freedom is not the mere ability to choose. This would be altogether compatible with authority, that is, the taking of direction from another, provided only such direction is taken voluntarily. True freedom, for Kant, consists of autonomy. And by autonomy he means

* Any contribution of past "Jewish genius" is a contribution no doubt different from but not incommensurable with that of Greek genius. Why should the contemporary Jew have a qualitatively unique obligation to past Jewish contributions? The duty to assimilate Greek philosophy, if a duty at all, is incumbent, not on modern Greeks but on modern civilized men. This whole point is developed at greater length in my article, "Can There be Judaism Without Revelation?" in COMMENTARY, December 1951.

† It may be noted in passing, however, that Rabbinic Judaism balances this insistence on the importance of learning with an insistence on the importance of religious motive.

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the ability to choose in the light of standards approved by one's own thinking, conscience, and experience. Freedom as so defined is radically and completely incompatible with authority, that is, the taking of direction from another. Kant thinks that true enlightenment consists of autonomy, and hence of emancipation from authority; and that autonomy is man's noblest goal. A noble goal: but not a goal that is easy or popular. Kant continues: "It is so easy not to be of age. If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has conscience for me, a physician who decides my diet . . . I need not trouble myself. I need not think, if I can only pay."

The modern concept of autonomy has had revolutionary implications for religious thought. The first of these was stated by Kant himself. Holy Writ cannot legislate to moral conscience. Moral conscience must legislate to Holy Writ. We cannot accept a law as moral because it is Biblical. Rather, we can accept a Biblical law only if it is moral; and it *is* moral if approved by moral consciousness. Moses and Jesus are not moral legislators who provide us with moral standards. They merely illustrate moral standards which we already possess.*

THE second implication of the concept of autonomy became manifest in the course of the 19th century. Pre-modern historians accept past facts on the authority of reliable documents. And pre-modern Biblical historians accept Biblical facts on the authority of the Bible. But modern historians wholly dispense with authorities. They *reconstruct* the facts of the past, instead of accepting them on authority, and the reconstructing is done in the light of their critical reason. Documents are no longer authoritative statements of what has happened; they are merely one means among others which enable the historian to reconstruct what has happened.

To the modern Biblical historian, the Bible can be no exception. It too is not an authoritative statement of historical facts, but merely one source among others which aid in their reconstruction. Hence the discipline known as Biblical criticism is not a mysterious discipline in its own right. It is but a branch of modern critical history.

But is the Bible merely another book of moral maxims, or another historical record? What of its claim to being the record of a divine revelation? The most momentous of all implications of the concept of autonomy is that revelation is in principle impossible. Revelation is the incursion of a God who is *other* than man into the life of man; and man is receptive to his incursion. But such receptivity is in principle incompatible with autonomy. If indeed man is capable of autonomy, then autonomy is his highest possibility; and if and when he actualizes it, he has transcended all passivity and receptivity in creative self-realization. Only two possibilities therefore remain concerning revelation if man is capable of autonomy. Either God does not contact man at all, being nonexistent or necessarily absent. Or else the God who contacts man is not other than man and present *to* man, but rather present *in* man. Revelation occurs, in that case, in great moments of human self-realization and is identical with it. Religious experience, or moral conscience, are not stimulated or caused by God. They are themselves divine.

It is in this re-interpretation alone, then, that revelation is compatible with autonomy. But if thus re-interpreted, revelation cannot be accessible through acceptance of the Bible. No doubt the Bible is the product of creative religious genius. But if later generations accept it as an authority they do not gain access to revela-

* See chiefly Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (transl. Greene and Hudson). Kant, who undoubtedly would have had a profound regard for Judaism had he possessed an adequate knowledge of it, thought of it as a mere external legalistic system—a notion which seems to have reached him, ironically enough, through Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn.

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tion but on the contrary bar themselves from it. For revelation consists of spiritual creativity whereas they have lapsed into receptivity and passivity. Only if they themselves achieve spiritual creativity can they penetrate, beyond the product of ancient creative genius, to that genius itself, achieving spiritual sympathy with it. But if they do achieve such creativity, then recourse to either the Bible or the genius which produced it is no longer needed. That bold, iconoclastic reformed clergyman, D. F. Schleiermacher, was able to write: "Not he has true religion who believes in a Holy Scripture, but he who does not require such a Scripture, and indeed could compose one in his own right."

Such, then, are the main implications of the modern concept of autonomy, so far as they are relevant to religion. Whether or not that concept is valid we must in due course inquire. For the present it must be shown that the concept of autonomy has, at any rate, enough validity for the liberal Jew to make pre-modern concepts of religious authority in principle unacceptable. Indeed, it was through recognition of this fact that liberal Judaism first came into being.

Pre-modern Judaism was by no means blindly authoritarian. Tradition stresses that R. Akiba interpreted the Torah so freely that Moses himself could not recognize it; and that what matters in the observance of the 613 commandments is not the letter but the spirit. At the same time, R. Akiba thought that he was merely drawing out what was in the Torah, and tradition insists that the commandments be observed, preferably to be sure in spirit as well as in letter, but in letter in any case. R. Akiba's conviction and the insistence of tradition in the end rest on one single fundamental belief, and this belief is the ultimate basis of pre-modern Jewish authority: the belief, not only in revelation, but in verbal revelation; the conviction that the Torah is not a human product, even one produced under the impact of divine revelation, but quite literally a divine product, dictated by God.

In breaking with the Orthodox view of authority, it is with this belief that, in the final analysis, the liberal Jew broke. Nor can he, even in his most romantic moods, return to that belief today. He broke with it under the impact of the concept of autonomy. But whatever the validity of that concept, it has enough validity to make the break inevitable.

Orthodox apologists often harp on specific blunders or excesses of Biblical criticism. But the true impact of Biblical criticism does not lie in particular radical assertions, such as that Israel never stood at Mt. Sinai. It would be as great even if all the critics agreed that Israel *had* stood at Mt. Sinai. The impact lies, not in specific assertions, but in basic assumptions. A medieval thinker such as Judah Halevi could accept Biblical facts absolutely, on the authority of 600,000 witnesses and an unbroken tradition. A modern historian can accept them, if at all, only tentatively, as a hypothesis capable of being overthrown. In the modern age, to follow the lead of Judah Halevi would be to exempt the Torah, alone among all historical documents, from the methodological requirements of modern history. But this is for the liberal Jew intellectually impossible. He can indeed, as we shall forthwith argue, believe in revelation. But he cannot possibly believe in verbal revelation, that is, in a divinely handed down text.

To do so is not only an intellectual impossibility. It is a moral and spiritual impossibility as well. When confronted with Biblical laws and concepts which seemed offensive to his conscience, the pre-modern Jew had two basic choices. Believing as he did in verbal revelation, he could see himself forced to swallow his scruples. Thus the Orthodox Jew prays for the return of animal sacrifices even today. Or he could interpret what seemed offensive so as to make it acceptable; and believing as he did in verbal revelation, he could believe that his interpretation was faithful to the

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literal meaning of the Biblical text. For the liberal Jew, both of these escapes are impossible. He is too deeply imbued with the modern historical spirit to be able to believe that modern values are implicit in ancient laws and concepts whose letter contradicts them. Nor can he pray for the return of animal sacrifices. To him, these are ancient but long outmoded ways of worshipping God.

The upshot, then, is clear. Whether or not he can accept revelation, the liberal Jew cannot, at any rate, accept *verbal* revelation. To accept it would be to accept an authority which would silence or fetter his critical reason and his spiritual conscience. But he would cease to be a liberal if he betrayed his duty to give free rein to both.

But some liberal Jews have always thought it necessary to go far beyond these negative conclusions. The concept of autonomy was accepted by them completely, with all its implications. Indeed, some have gone so far as to make the concept of autonomy the central positive concept of liberal Judaism. The "Pittsburgh Platform," adopted by a representative group of Reform rabbis in 1885, may be cited as a significant illustration. That platform frankly replaces revelation with "the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man." It openly rejects all traditional laws except moral laws, and what is moral it determines by the standards of modern consciousness. It regards Judaism as "a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason." Not Judaism, not revelation, not the Torah, but reason is the one and only standard of truth and value!

Still, liberal Jews have frequently hedged as regards the concept of autonomy, and they have done so in increasing numbers as time went on. Thus while the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 is forthright, the "Columbus Platform," adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1937, equivocates: speaking of religious experience, but also of revelation; and asserting religious progress, but also that prophetic insight is unique, and hence presumably still unsurpassed. Liberal hedging is epitomized in a prayer, known to us all, which bids us "welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers of our own time." Whether both truths are revelation or neither is; whether the ancient legislates to the modern, or the modern to the ancient: these are questions which remain unanswered.

Superficially a sign of intellectual cowardice, such liberal hedging in fact reflects a profound Jewish awareness. It springs from the realization that the concept of autonomy, if carried to its logical conclusion, and made the central concept of liberal Judaism, must necessarily destroy Judaism.

To demonstrate this assertion is not difficult: to judge the past by the standards of the present is to presuppose the absolute superiority of the present. It is not merely to reject blind submission to the authority of the past. It is also to deny that we can learn anything whatsoever from the past. The past may approximate or on occasion even reach the level of the present. But it cannot by definition ever and at any point surpass it. Precisely because present standards decide what is true and of value, a Judaism based on the concept of autonomy would therefore have to be a wholly contemporary Judaism, cut loose from all essential ties with the past.

Further, such a Judaism would have to be a wholly man-made product. If based on the concept of autonomy, it could leave no room for revelation, understood as the incursion of a God other than man into the life of man. The voice of God could be present in such a Judaism only if identified with the "religious genius" which had produced it; and the genius would have to be, in essence, contemporary.

How could such a Judaism be related to the modern Jew? It could be under-

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stood as a body of universal truths and values. But then there would be no reason why to accept this body one need be a Jew, or why a Jew need accept it *because* he is a Jew. We should be left, not with Judaism but with a "religion of mankind." Or it could be regarded as a body of particular Jewish truths and values, true and valid for Jews alone. But in that case we would save Jewishness and Judaism only at the cost of lapsing into chauvinism and idolatry. In the past, the Jew persisted in his Jewishness for the sake of the worship of God. But if God is not other than man but present in human vision, and if He is present for the Jew in his Jewish vision, then the Jew of the future would have to persist in his Jewishness, for the sake of the worship, not of God but of the Jewish vision of God.

This serves to show the most serious and indeed catastrophic implication of the belief in autonomy for Judaism. The God of traditional Judaism can be present *to* man. If man is autonomous then God can be present only *in* man, as "conscience" or "insight" or "creative genius." But to accept this is in the end to fall prey to idolatry. That the voice of the heart is the voice of God is a belief which could seem plausible in ages given to romantic enthusiasm. But this age cannot but see that the heart, while endowed with great spiritual power, is also, as Jeremiah said, deceitful above all things and exceeding weak. And we arrive at this crucial conclusion: God is accessible to man, either as He who is other than man and yet enters into human life; or He is not accessible at all. But this means that we must choose between Judaism and the belief in autonomy. We cannot have both.

THE central problem of the liberal Jew has now become clear. Judaism requires a twofold receptivity: a receptivity toward the past, and a receptivity toward a God who speaks through both present and past. The problem is whether this twofold receptivity is compatible with freedom. And this *is* a problem because the concept of autonomy implies that it is not compatible.

But one may wonder whether true freedom is always autonomy. Let us first ask: must every free relation to the past assume the absolute superiority of the present over the past? No doubt one's first reaction is to answer in the affirmative. Present science is superior to past science, and present history, to the history of the past. To think otherwise would be to lapse into reaction.

But reflection gives rise to second thoughts. Present science builds on past science, and present history on past history. Is the same necessarily true of religion and morality? Science and history deal with concepts only. Religion and morality are concerned not only with concepts but also with human lives. Concepts can be built on other concepts. But lives cannot be built on other lives. Hence while in science and history there can be steady progress, progress in religion and morality is at best only haphazard and equivocal. Religious and moral truths, even if long discovered, must always be re-discovered; and they are re-discovered, not just by being re-thought but by being re-lived. In short, in religion and morality, the present is not necessarily superior to the past.

This is why one cannot simply subject past religious and moral beliefs to present standards, any more than one can simply submit to their authority. To do the latter would be to avoid the responsibilities of freedom. To do the former would be to remain with a very limited freedom which, by idolizing the present, would become enclosed in its parochial bounds. A truly free spiritual relation to the past is not either of these one-way relations; it is the two-way relation of a genuine *encounter*: a relation in which the past, to be sure, is exposed to the judgment of the present, but in which the present also exposes itself to the judgment of the past. In such a relation there is acceptance from the past. But there is no blind acceptance. For what

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is unacceptable is not accepted, and what is accepted is appropriated by the recipient and made his own. But this is the crucial point: what the present recipient has accepted from the past is something he has truly learned. It is something new, something which he did not possess before the encounter. This is why, when he accepts it and makes it his own, his very being is transformed.

Such a receptivity, then, far from being incompatible with freedom, on the contrary enlarges and enhances it. It raises the recipient above the narrow dogmas of his time. No doubt a merely passive receptivity is incompatible with freedom. But not every receptivity is simply passive. We must therefore conclude that the problem of freedom and authority, as stated in terms of the concept of autonomy, is a falsely stated problem. And it is falsely stated because the concept of autonomy is itself invalid. Or rather, it is valid for the activities of abstract scientific and historical thought. But it is not valid as a concept of freedom which applies in human life.

This is our first important, positive conclusion, and it frees the liberal Jew from a time-honored but false dilemma. Critics on the right charge that to accept the past must be to accept it entire, and that all selective acceptance is arbitrary. Critics on the left charge that to select from the past is to be committed to present standards of selection, and that to be thus committed is to have no need of the past. Jointly these critics have always charged the liberal Jew with mere compromise.

But such charges have no force for the truly liberal Jew, who meets the Jewish past in a genuine encounter. For in this encounter he learns that not all selecting from the past is arbitrary; and not all acceptance from it a form of blind submission. No doubt his encounter with the past is fraught with danger. He will often project into the past what he believes himself to be discovering in it. And he will often fall prey to blind worship of the past when he believes himself to be freely accepting it. But he must resist the temptation of escaping from the encounter, by a flight either into or from the past. Rather he must cope with the dangers of the encounter in the encounter itself.

WE CONCLUDE, then, that human freedom is compatible with receptivity to the past. But is it compatible also with receptivity to a God who speaks to man through present and past? With this question, we have come upon the crux of our whole inquiry. This question is the crucial question. The difficulties it poses are the crucial difficulties. Indeed, on our ability to answer this question the success of our whole inquiry depends. And in the final analysis, everything thus far said has been said to prepare just for this question: is human freedom compatible with human receptivity to a God other than man—a God under whose authority he therefore stands?*

Reception from a human other can appropriate what it receives; the recipient can make what he receives his own. But can he appropriate the gift of a divine Other, and make it his own? Appropriating reception is possible in the first case because giver and recipient are both human. But is it possible if only the recipient is human while the Giver is divine? It may seem that only two possibilities exist in this case. Either the human recipient can indeed appropriate what he receives. But

* This is the crux of the present, but not of every, inquiry into revelation. The question "Is revelation compatible with human freedom?" is logically secondary to the question "Can a modern man believe in revelation at all?" After all, while in the case of receptivity to a human other, one can *know* the existence of this other, in the case of receptivity to a divine Other, one can accept the existence of this Other, if at all, only *on faith*. But an inquiry into faith and revelation is not part of our present purpose, which is confined to inquiring into the compatibility between the liberal and the Jewish faith. See, however, the article previously referred to and also "Jewish Existence and the Living God" (*A People and Its Faith*, ed. A. Rose, pre-published in COMMENTARY, August 1959).

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then the divine Giver cannot, after all, be other than the human recipient, and we are led back to the view that the divine voice is in man, rather than being other than the voice of man. Or else the divine Giver is indeed wholly other than the human recipient. But then the latter must receive His gift in radical passivity, and we are led back to pre-modern authoritarianism. For if the prophet is the mere vessel of the divine revelation, then the words he speaks cannot be a human reflection of an event of divine incursion, but must be quite literally the words of God. In short, we should have landed in Orthodoxy. Thus it seems that the crucial dilemma of liberal Judaism is still unresolved.

As we at long last try to cope with this dilemma we must first turn for guidance to traditional Judaism. For while authoritarian, traditional Judaism is by no means blindly so. And we must never forget that what unites liberal with traditional Judaism is far more than what separates them.

Traditional Judaism is often pictured as a barren legalism, in which the observance of external laws takes the place of a relation with the living God. If this account were correct, then revelation, as understood by traditional Judaism, could reveal laws only, not God along with these laws. And the Jew bound by them would be related only to these laws, giving recognition to their divine origin merely by submitting to them in blind passivity. In fact, however, this legalistic picture is nothing but a gross caricature. Except for rare periods of spiritual decay, traditional Judaism was always a religion, not of *law*, but of *commandment*.

A law discloses only itself. A commandment discloses its giver along with itself. Obedience to a law does not necessarily create a relation to its giver. Obedience to a commandment necessarily creates such a relation. In Judaism, revelation is commandment rather than law. And this means that revelation does not disclose the will of God to the exclusion of God, just as it does not disclose God to the exclusion of His will. It discloses both in indissoluble union. And this disclosure calls for an appropriate response on the part of those to whom it is made: that is, that they should both accept the commandment, and accept it as God's commandment. In prophetic utterances, the words "Thus saith the Lord" are not a mere preamble; they are an essential part of the message. To state the whole point very briefly we may say: traditional Judaism is not the mechanical observance of a system of laws. It is the living covenant between God and Israel.*

Where revelation is thus experienced and understood its reception cannot possibly occur in total passivity. Were this the case, the Divine presence would shatter the will of the human recipient, and indeed his very selfhood. The recipient would, as the mystic claims he does, dissolve into ineffable union with the Divine. But revelation which *commands* leaves the human *self* intact, for the commandment is addressed to him. It leaves his free *will* intact, for it is to his will that the commandment appeals. Indeed, the commandment accentuates this will, for it confronts it with a challenge from which there is no escape. Finally and most importantly, in Judaism revelation-as-commandment does not challenge the recipient merely to receive and fulfill the commandment, but to fulfill it with joy —that is, to appropriate it and make it his own.

To the mystic, revelation-as-commandment has always seemed an impossibility. How can finite man, touched by the Infinite, retain his finite identity? How can this touch even accentuate his will? Finally, how can he appropriate the gift of the Infinite, while himself remaining fi-

* The distinction here made between law and commandment is indebted to a celebrated exchange of letters between Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. See Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning* (ed. N. N. Glatzer, New York 1955), pp. 109 ff.

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nite? This may seem an impossibility. Yet it is the innermost secret of Jewish faith and Jewish life that this "impossibility" is actual.

How can it be actual? It is actual by virtue of divine love. In the very moment of touch which threatens to devour finite selfhood, revelation turns into commandment which re-establishes and reassures that selfhood. In the instant in which the commandment confronts man with a radical otherness which threatens to destroy him, it divests itself of enough of its otherness to become capable of enhancing human life instead of destroying it. In Judaism, then, love is not a revelation separate from commandment, let alone an "idea which was evolved only later in religious development." The very disclosure of commandment is also and already a disclosure of love, and would be impossible without it. And the traditional concepts of God as commanding King who inspires fear, and as forgiving Father who inspires love, are not separate, let alone incompatible concepts. The King is Father, and the Father, King. Hence it has well been said: "Love and fear God; tremble and rejoice when you perform the commandments."

Where revelation discloses itself as commandment, later generations which are subject to it cannot be related to it as to a dead past. Were this the case, the commandment would be living commandment only to those who first received it. To all others it would be mere dead law. The past for traditional Judaism is not a dead past. Through it still speaks the God who gave it. He still speaks because He still lives, and because His covenant with Israel is still alive. And the Jew today, as the Jew of old, is enjoined to practice, not arid law, but living commandment. Hence the Midrash well says: "All souls, even those which had still to be created, were present at the revelation of Mt. Sinai."

Our crucial question has thus in part been answered, in terms of Jewish tradition. Is human receptivity to a God other than man compatible with human freedom? If revelation is neither arid law nor mystic union but *commandment,* it is not only compatible with freedom but impossible without it. The human self remains intact even in the moment of touch by the Divine. He is free to choose for or against His commandment. Finally and most importantly, he is free to appropriate His commandment: to observe it, not in blind, slavish fear, but in the kind of love which exists because the recipient has made God's commandment his own, and God's will his. There can be no greater freedom than this. We saw above that free appropriation of the human past raises man above the parochialism of the present. We see now that free appropriation of God's commandment raises him above a human parochialism which is the lot of man when he is divorced from God. The Midrash thus rightly says: "When the Torah came into the world, freedom came into the world."

JEWISH tradition, then, solves most of the liberal's problems. But it leaves one serious problem unsolved, and to solve it, the liberal Jew must crucially depart from tradition. As for tradition, a recipient of the commandment is free to accept or reject it; and if accepting it, to observe it in fear, or in love as well as in fear. But it would appear that human spontaneity does not enter into the act of hearing itself, for the traditionalist holds that what he hears is quite *literally* the word of God. But this belief, as we have seen long ago, is to the liberal unacceptable.

Hence we are compelled to put forward a different doctrine. Human spontaneity enters not merely into the response to the commandment, but already into the *hearing* of it. Hearing does not precede the human response to the divine address. The hearing already contains elements of response. Hence every single word any prophet ever spoke is shot through with human interpretation. Yet had there been no event of divine revelation there would

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have been no human interpretation. Franz Rosenzweig rightly said: " 'He came down' [on Sinai]—this already concludes the revelation; 'He spoke' is the beginning of interpretation, and certainly 'I am.' "

This doctrine, if acceptable, removes all the remaining liberal difficulties. Regarding the Torah as the human reflection of a divine revelation, rather than as itself literal revelation, the liberal can regard it as a human book which is the legitimate object of historical criticism, and whose commandments do not have, in letter, authority over him. But he may at the same time regard it as the prime means of access to a divine revelation which addresses him, as much as his ancestors. In his quest for the commandment as it applies to him, he does well indeed to take the ancient human reflection of the revelation with the utmost seriousness. But were he to subject himself blindly to its authority, as if it were itself the literal word of God, he would not fulfill God's commandment, but rather bar himself from it. He must hear with his own ears. He cannot hear with ears of yore.

But is the above doctrine acceptable? If all revealed content is shot through with human interpretation, must we not conclude that revelation, apart from this interpretation, is wholly without content and therefore irrelevant? Do we not, after all, return at this late point—in practice if not in theory—to the unacceptable doctrine of autonomy, the doctrine which identifies the word of God with that of man?

The answer is that revelation and interpretation can be distinguished in abstract thought, but not in the concrete existential situation in which both occur. To make the distinction between revelation and interpretation is important, lest we subject ourselves blindly to the authority of the ancient interpretation. But once we have made it we must ourselves return to the existential situation, and to its responsibilities. And to do so is to ask: what does the divine commandment demand of *us?* What can we hear? What can we do?

In search of an answer, the liberal Jew of today must encounter the ancient reflection of the divine incursion which constituted the covenant under which he still stands. He must also encounter the tradition of those of his ancestors who sought—and received—answers before him. But if and when he himself receives an answer as a result of this encounter, it will be—if the encounter itself is genuine—the answer heard by him with modern ears, and addressed to him in a modern situation. Heard by him, it will no doubt bear the stamp of his human interpretation, just as did the answers heard by earlier generations. But if it is a genuine answer, genuinely heard, his human interpretation will nevertheless be the result of God's address. For He, the God of Israel, still lives; and the liberal Jew, son of the covenant, still stands at Mt. Sinai, as did his fathers.

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S. Y. AGNON

Two Stories

S. Y. Agnon is generally considered to be the foremost living writer of Hebrew prose. In addition to his numerous novels and short stories, he has also published anthologies of selections from Hebrew classics; one such, Yamim Noraim, *was translated into English as* The Days of Awe, *and the interested reader may find an excerpt from it in* Commentary *of September 1948. Agnon lives and writes in Israel, where he had first settled in 1908. The two stories below, examples of his later work, have been translated by Rabbi Jules Harlow, assistant executive director of the Rabbinical Assembly of America; they are from the tenth volume of his collected works,* Samukh V'nireh, *published in 1950 in Tel Aviv. They are here printed with the permission of Schocken Books, Agnon's publisher in Israel and America, and will be included in a volume planned by Schocken of the first collection of Agnon's stories to appear in English.*

I. The Orchestra

All that year I was busy. Every day, from dawn until midnight, I sat at my desk and wrote, sometimes out of habit and sometimes pulled along by my quill, under the spell of what we presume to call inspiration. Because of this, I diverted my attention from the rest of my affairs. When I did remember them, I only remembered to push them aside. However, on the day before Rosh Hashanah I said to myself: "A new year is approaching and I have left many letters unanswered. Let me sit down and answer them and begin the new year with no obligations."

As I conduct myself every day, so I did that day, except for one thing. I was accustomed to waking every day at sunrise, but that day I awoke at three in the morning, for it was the night of *Zekhor Brit,* a night on which people rise to recite *Selichot* earlier than usual.

Before I sat down to attend to the letters, I thought to myself, "A new year is beginning, and it is only proper to begin it in a state of purity. If I should not have the time to bathe in the river, because of these letters, I will draw myself a tub of warm water."

At that moment, Tcharne* happened to be at my house. This was the old woman Tcharne who used to boast to me about the fact that she had been a servant in my grandfather's house before I was born. Tcharne said to me, "Your wife is busy preparing for the holiday, and you make extra work for her. Come to your grandfather's house, I will draw a hot bath for you."

Her suggestion seemed a good one. "I do need to have my hair cut in honor of Rosh Hashanah, and on the way to the barber I will come to bathe."

I looked through the letters, trying to decide which deserved to be answered first. Since they were many and time was short, and since it was impossible in one day to answer everything people had written over the entire year, I thought I would select the important ones, after which I would attend to the middling ones, and then to the least important. While I was sorting

* A name derived from the Russian for "dark" or "black."

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them, it occurred to me to be rid of the trivial letters first, so as to be completely free to attend to the important ones.

It is the nature of the trivial to hamper. Just because it is trivial and not at all essential, it is hard to have to turn one's mind to it. And if such a trivial letter contains anything at all important, then you are faced with two problems: what was on the writer's mind, and what answer is he looking for. My desire to answer grew strong to the degree in which I knew that I had nothing to answer, for if I left the letters unanswered, they would bother me, their very existence being a bother, since whenever I remember them I come to petty thoughts.

I took up my quill to write, but I could write nothing. How strange! All year I had been writing effortlessly, and now that I had to write two or three casual lines, my quill would not budge. I laid that letter aside, and picked up another.

This was not a letter, but a ticket for a concert which the King of Musicians was going to conduct. I have heard that whoever listens to him becomes rejuvenated. A story is told of a man who went to all the concerts regularly without being in the slightest moved by them, so that he thought he did not understand music. Once he happened to attend a concert of this conductor. Afterward he said, "Now I know that I understand music. But all the musicians I have heard up until now do not know what music is." I put the concert ticket in my pocket.

THE days before holidays are short. Some, coming in the fall or winter, have fewer hours of daylight, and some are short because of the time taken up by holiday preparations. The day before Rosh Hashanah is especially short, both because of early sunset and preparing for the Day of Judgment. By noon, I had not answered a single letter. I put the letters aside, and I said to myself, "Between the first and the tenth of the month, I will do what I have been unable to do until now." It would have been good to begin the new year free of obligations, but what could I do? The trivial letters contained nothing that could help me answer them.

I set out for my grandfather's house, to bathe for the holiday, in the bath Tcharne had drawn for me. When I reached the house, I found the door locked. I kept circling the house, all four sides, and whenever I reached the door, I stopped to knock.

A neighbor peeped out from behind the trellis at her window. "You must want Tcharne. She went to the market to buy some new fruit, so that she could say *She-he-che-ya-nu* upon it." I continued to circle the house until Tcharne returned.

Properly, that old woman ought to have apologized to me, since she had made me wait, and stolen my time. But not only did she not apologize, she just stood there and chattered. If my memory does not fail me, she told me she had found a pomegranate, and that even though it was rotting, its seeds had not fallen out.

From the town hall tower, three chimes suddenly were heard. I looked at my watch, and saw that three hours had already passed. My watch always differs with the clock of the town hall, but on that day the two had made peace. And from the heavens, too, there seemed to be agreement. Had I tarried so long on the way, and had I been so long circling the house? In any case, three hours were gone, leaving me with barely two and a half hours before the start of Rosh Hashanah, and that old woman continued chattering about a pomegranate which was rotting and about its seeds which had not fallen out.

I interrupted her to ask, "Have you drawn my bath? Is the water hot?"

Tcharne set down the basket in her hand, and cried out, "O my God in heaven! I did intend to draw a bath for you!"

"And you have not done so."

"I have not done so," she said. "I will do it right away."

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"Hurry, Tcharne, hurry! Today won't last forever!"

She picked between the points of her teeth with her finger. "You don't need to rush me. I know that time does not stand still, and I won't stand still either. I am going into the house to light the fire and heat the water for you, and your hot bath is almost ready."

I strolled in front of the house while the water was being heated. The old judge passed by. I remembered a question which I wanted to ask. But I was afraid that we would talk so much that I would not have time to bathe for Rosh Hashanah, for once you approach this judge, he does not let you go. I put my question aside for another time and didn't approach him. To help pass the time, I took out the concert ticket and I noticed that the concert was scheduled for the first night of Rosh Hashanah. It was strange; I, who am not a concert-goer, had been invited to a concert for the first night of Rosh Hashanah. I put back the ticket in my pocket, and I continued my stroll in front of the house.

ORAH,* my little niece, appeared, she whose voice is as sweet as the voice of a violin. She is like a violin which the fiddler has leaned against an unsteady wall, only to have the wall fall on it. I saw that she was depressed.

"Where to and where from, Orah? You look like a doe who went to a spring and found no water."

Orah said, "I am going away from here."

"Where are you going, and why? You have always wanted to see the famous conductor, and now that he is here to conduct our orchestra you're going away."

Orah wept bitterly. "Oh, dear uncle, I have no ticket!"

I laughed with a full heart. "Let me wipe away your tears," I said to her.

Lovingly I gazed at her and thought, "How good it is to be able to satisfy the desire of this precious child. Of all the world's delights, music is the most delightful for her, and of all the world's musicians, she is intoxicated with love of the conductor who this very night will conduct the great orchestra."

I reached into my pocket, to take out the ticket, to give it to Orah. Again I smiled with a full heart, like a man who is able to benefit someone. But Orah was unaware of my good intentions. She hung herself around my neck, and gave me a goodbye kiss. I was distracted and forgot what I was looking for, so I did not give Orah the ticket. While I stood there, astonished and amazed, Tcharne came to call me.

The stove was burning, the bathtub was polished and bright, and the water in the bathtub bubbled and rose toward me. But I had no strength to bathe. Even time was against me. I told my brother, "You bathe, for I am a weak man, and if I bathe in hot water, I have to rest afterwards, and there is not enough time now."

I left the bath. Walking home, I took off my hat and held it in my hand. A wind passed by, ruffling my hair. Where was my head? While waiting for the bath, I certainly could have gone to the barber. I looked up at the sky. The sun was already about to set. I walked on home, my head lowered in depression. My daughter came out to greet me, dressed in her holiday clothes. She stretched a finger into a hole of air and said, "Light!"

"What is she talking about?" I asked myself. "The sun has set, there is not a bit of light. Or perhaps she means the candles which have been kindled for the holiday."

I saw the candles. "The holy day has begun, I must hurry to the synagogue." My daughter looked at my old clothes and placed her small hands over her new dress, trying to hide it, so as not to embarrass her father who wears his old clothes. She was close to weeping, over herself for wearing a new dress while her father wears old clothes, and over her father who wears

* A name derived from the Hebrew for "light."

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old clothes at the moment when a new year has arrived.

After the evening meal, I went outdoors. The sky was black, but many stars sparkled in it, lighting up its darkness. Not a single person was outside, all of the houses were sunk in sleep. I, too, began to sink into sleep. But this sleep was not really a sleep, for I could feel my feet walking. I walked and walked until I reached a place where I heard music. I knew that I had arrived at the concert hall. I took out the ticket and I entered.

The hall was full. Male and female violinists, male and female drummers, trumpeters, and players of other instruments, all of them were standing, dressed in black, playing without pause. The great conductor was nowhere to be seen, but the musicians performed as if someone were standing over them, wielding his baton. All the male and female musicians were friends or acquaintances of mine, I recognized them from the various places in which I had lived. How did it happen that all my friends, men and women, were here together, all in one orchestra?

I took a seat and watched intently. Each musician plays by himself, but all the strains are blended into one song. Every man and woman is joined to his or her instrument, and the instruments are joined to the floor of the temple, but each player thinks that he alone is bound, he is too ashamed to ask his neighbor to set him free. Or perhaps the musicians know that they are joined to their instruments and that their instruments are joined to the floor, only they believe that of their own volition they and their instruments are bound and that they play of their own volition. But this much is certain: though they never take their eyes from their instruments, they cannot see what their hands are doing, because they are blind, to a man. And I am afraid that even their ears do not hear what they play, they have become deaf from playing so much.

I slid out of my seat and inched my way to the door. The door was open, and a man whom I had not seen when I entered stood in the doorway. He resembled all other doormen, yet there was in him something of the character of the old judge who does not leave you alone once you approach him.

I said to him, "I should like to leave."

He took my words into his mouth, and answered me with my own voice. "To leave? Why?"

"I have drawn a bath for myself, and I must hurry before it gets cold."

He answered me in a voice which would have frightened even a stronger man. "It's boiling! It's boiling! Your brother has already been scalded in it."

I said in apology, "I was busy with letters and had no time to bathe."

He asked, "What letters?"

I showed him a letter. He bent over me and he said, "Don't you know that *I* wrote this letter?"

"I tried to answer you."

He looked at me. "What did you try to answer?"

My words were stifled by his voice, my eyes closed and I began groping with my hands. Suddenly I found myself standing in front of my house.

My daughter came out. "I'm bringing you a candle," she said.

I asked her, "Do you think that candle will light up my darkness?"

Before she could bring the candle, fire burst from the stove and burned in a circle around her. A woman stood in front of the stove, adding wood to the fire. Because of the fire and the smoke, I couldn't look, and I was unable to see if it was the old woman Tcharne or Orah, my niece, standing in front of the stove, stoking the fire.

Dread overcame me, and I stood as if joined to the ground. I was depressed, for at a time when all good sleepers slept, I was awake. Yet, to be exact, I was not the only one awake, the stars in heaven were also awake. By the light of the stars I saw what I saw. I felt insignificant, and so my words were stifled within me.

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II. Another Tallit

ABOUT my other prayer shawls I have already told. So now I merely add what happened on Yom Kippur with the *tallit* which I had left in the synagogue of my grandfather, may he rest in peace.

That Yom Kippur, I had the notion to pray with my grandfather. Because I lived far from the synagogue and because I had stayed in bed too long that morning, I arrived after the chanting of *Pesukei Dezimra*. This is truly regrettable, for on Yom Kippur, at my grandfather's synagogue, they recite this part of the service verse by verse, in a special chant. Already in my childhood, before I knew the meaning of the words, whenever the cantor wrapped his *tallit* around his face and chanted *Chei Haolamim,* I would be perplexed, for the cantor called to Him in a loud voice even though He was right there! Why did he cover his face? If he uncovered his face, the whole world would be filled with a great joy such as I felt when I played hide-and-seek with my father. We used to look for each other until, finally, I would uncover my face, and then we found each other.

When I entered the synagogue, my grandfather brought his face out of the folds of his *tallit,* and turned here and there, searching out a seat for me in the synagogue which was already filled with worshippers. By the east wall, to the right of my grandfather, sat a group of old men, each looking different from all the others and, it goes without saying, from other men in general. Their faces were wrinkled like raisins, their beards looked like cinnamon sticks. Their eyes, which had no lashes, were bloodshot, yet from their eyes there streamed a joy so substantial you could feel it with your hands. How did they all come to be in one place, in my grandfather's synagogue, and why were their features so different? One of them, who understood what my grandfather wanted of him, answered in Aramaic: "The law for Yom Kippur is not like that of Passover which states that all who want can sit and eat." To paraphrase his statement in terms of the matter at hand, we might say, "Today I am not obliged to be pushed around to furnish a seat for one who has none."

I was disturbed that my grandfather should be troubled on my account and I said to him, "Please, do not bother about me. I shall find a place for myself."

I was just talking. This was his synagogue and he could find no place for me. How could I find a seat by myself? However, my grandfather was troubled not only because there was no place for me, but because I had come so late. I deliberated: perhaps I should tell him that I prayed the morning service at the synagogue in my neighborhood. But it is not nice for one to make his grandfather a cause for telling lies.

Because of the crowding and the heat and the candles and the great number of worshippers, the roof of my mouth was dry. Leibel, the Zaddik's grandson, came over to me. "Come with me," he said. I didn't know why he asked me to go with him, but I was drawn to him, so I went.

When he had brought me to his house, he left me in the hall, and came back with a pitcher which he offered me to sniff at, so that my burning thirst should be eased.

I took the pitcher in both my hands and brought it up to my nose, all the while amazed: why did he fill the pitcher with fruit juice? Couldn't he find a little water? Leibel's blank face showed no desire to answer my questions. Meanwhile, the juice in the pitcher actually began to froth up toward my teeth. I sucked in my lips to shield my teeth from the fruit juice. But it continued bubbling up from the lip of the pitcher to my lips, frothing around my nose, gushing up to bring its taste to my mouth. I was filled with anger at Leibel.

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I seized him and dragged him after me, and it looked as though we were walking together.

When we reached the synagogue, my grandfather again gave me a troubled glance. Could he have sensed what had happened? I acted as if there were some other explanation.

"You are upset because I stand here without a *tallit* on. I'll get my *tallit,* the one that's here in your synagogue, and wrap myself in it right away."

I looked up to see if he was satisfied, and I saw that they had brought benches into the synagogue and placed them to the left of the Holy Ark, one on top of the other, like the steps of a bathhouse. A man whose name I do not wish to mention was standing on the top step, wearing some type of baker's hat, and chanting hymns which were not from the Yom Kippur service. A small boy—his son or grandson—stood at his side, accompanying the hymns with foolish gesticulations. Half the congregation was smiling at them. How did they get here? And when did they get here?

Meanwhile, they stepped down and went away. "What is this?" I asked myself. "When my grandfather was looking for a place for me, why didn't he look to the left of the Ark? There were many benches and many empty places there. And then again, how could that man leave in the middle of services, and where did he go?"

MY GRANDFATHER looked at me. Suddenly I reached into a hole in a table and brought out my *tallit.* I had often looked for my *tallit* there without finding it, but now I found it. Unless you say that someone else had taken it and then returned it, it is an amazing thing indeed.

As I prepared to wrap myself in my *tallit,* I saw that one of the fringes was missing. A certain fellow whom we usually ignore though he never ignores us whispered to me: "Your *tallit* has only three fringes." I began deliberating: what is he telling me? Don't I know that a *tallit* with only three fringes cannot be used? Or did he want to remind me of a forgotten tradition: while a man is alive, even though he may be holding a *tallit* of three fringes in his hand, he is not allowed to wear it. But when he is dead, they pursue him with a proper *tallit* of four fringes, pluck out one fringe, and force him to wear it.

Depression overcame me. Not because of what had been whispered to me, but because of this holy day of Yom Kippur which had passed by without a prayer, without anything.

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F. R. LEAVIS

George Eliot's Zionist Novel

Daniel Deronda *is notable among George Eliot's major novels for its preoccupation with the Jewish question and the beginnings of the Zionist movement in the 19th century. Most readers of the novel have felt that the "Zionist" part is far inferior to the part dealing with the life of Gwendolen Harleth; and the author of the following examination of* Daniel Deronda, *the English critic, F. R. Leavis, once suggested that it would be proper to cut away the "Zionist" part and publish "Gwendolen Harleth" as the essential great book. In the present essay—which will form the introduction to a paperback edition of* Daniel Deronda *to be issued in the spring by Harper Torchbooks —Dr. Leavis significantly reverses himself. The author, among other books, of* Revaluation *and* The Great Tradition, *and the editor of* Scrutiny *throughout its eighteen-year history, Dr. Leavis is also a Fellow of Downing College, Cambridge. His last previous contribution to* COMMENTARY *was "T. S. Eliot's Stature as Critic" (November 1958).*

DANIEL DERONDA (1876) was George Eliot's last novel. It is also, of all her novels, that which presents her most massively and compellingly as a great novelist—one of the greatest—and shows her greatness as its most Tolstoyan (for, peculiarly among the novelists of her language she has qualities prompting that description). All through her novelist's career, in fact, she continued to develop her powers, achieving the art that reveals them at their most impressive in the immense effort of the close. This is not, of course, to say that she achieved a perfect art (*Daniel Deronda* is more obviously not perfect than any other of her novels), or that her development manifested itself in a simple steady progress. She offers us, as a person, and in the creative genius her life nourished, a case of very interesting complexity. She never—except (I think one may fairly say) in *Silas Marner,* which tale, among her novels, recommends itself to us as a product of triumphant and unlabored inspiration, yet is not the less a major classic—achieved perfection. The intimately related constatation is that she went on developing, though she left behind her neither the Maggie Tulliver (of *The Mill on the Floss*) in her make-up (for all the advance in maturity), nor the George Eliot who wrote *Silas Marner*—and nothing of that kind again.

She is among those great writers any one of whose works makes us, as we focus on it, think of its relation to the other works in the *oeuvre* and (it virtually follows) to the "case." I am not saying that the *Daniel Deronda* I am exalting is not, as a classic of major art, self-sufficient. The book stands in and as itself. The duly responsive reader cannot but see what it is that he has in front of him. Both the nature of the greatness and that there are distinctions to be made—discriminations between what represents its varied strength

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and what does not—must be plain. Yet no one can fail to divine that there is a "case" —a person and a life—behind the art, the oddities, and the failures. And with the relating of the given work to the *oeuvre* and the life, critical understanding becomes surer, more intelligent, more inward. I say "critical understanding," thinking strictly of the business of the literary critic as such, there being about the kind of diagnostic inquiry I have in mind when I talk of a "case" nothing impertinent. For, reversing T. S. Eliot's famous Flaubertian dictum, one can say that, where truly great art is in question, there is never a separation between the life that suffers and experiences and the mind that creates. To be intelligent about the personal significance of *Daniel Deronda,* the relation of the book to George Eliot's peculiar "case," is to have a surer appreciation of the characteristic impersonaltiy of the art she has created, on so large a scale, in the massive strong part of the book.

That part, I have elsewhere suggested,* might, by way of getting for George Eliot more of the recognition she deserves, be called *Gwendolen Harleth* and printed by itself (it would make a very substantial novel). The actual title, *Daniel Deronda,* is certainly a misdirection; it insists, as pointing to the *raison d'être* of the book, on the also very substantial part of it that does not come from the great creative George Eliot. But, in the re-reading that preceded the present note, my already growing sense that the surgery of disjunction would be a less simple and satisfactory affair than I had thought has been reinforced. And I have here given my reasons for holding that the admirer of George Eliot's genius, intent on a full appreciation, will demand the whole book that she wrote, and will be right. My own insistence now must be that, for such an appreciation, it is important to be clear just in what way the Zionist part (I may call it—all, I mean, of *Daniel Deronda* that is portended by the title) fails to justify the place given it by George Eliot in her total conception: what are the nature and significance of the failure and what is the relation of the characteristics manifested in the Zionist part to her creative greatness?

At this point I find it helpful to make a reference to Henry James's criticism. As a critic of George Eliot he seems to me unsurpassed, and everyone interested in her ought to know his commentaries—I am thinking in particular of the article written as a review of the John W. Cross *Life,* and of "*Daniel Deronda*: A Conversation," both of which are to be found in James's *Partial Portraits.* His fine intelligence shows to great advantage in them (it is not for nothing that he owes so much to George Eliot), and the sum of what he says conveys an appreciation that is perceptive and pretty just. Yet his criticism, distinguished as it is, is not altogether satisfactory: it contains a great deal in the way of fallacious proposition and dubious suggestion, and can be quoted in the furtherance of critical unenlightenment, the analysis it embodies being inadequate. For instance, faced, in considering *Daniel Deronda,* with making the major discrimination called for, James says: "All the Jewish part is at bottom cold."

We know what he means. The Jewish part was—inevitably—done from the outside. It was an achievement of those intellectual energies—the power of acquiring immense erudition with indefatigable labor (James speaks of "her exemption from cerebral lassitude"), and of applying it with an unremitting concern for factual and historical truth—which had gone to the working-up of the historical setting in *Romola.* One may be struck not only by the immense capacity for intellectual acquisition, but by the intelligence about the world of her time that had enabled George Eliot to forecast how the passion of nationalism would affect the Jews. And one may feel that at this date it is not James

* In *The Great Tradition.*—Ed.

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who, with his jibe (thrown out in the "Conversation" through the mouth of Pulcheria) about "tea-parties at Jerusalem," shows to advantage. The point I have to make, however, is that the whole case of George Eliot is more complex than James suggests.

The provincial girl, of lower middle-class origin, who by sheer ability established herself as a figure of the English intellectual world while still in young womanhood *was* a woman. She was fully a woman, with a woman's needs. When, at thirty-seven, she published her first fiction, she had already had a distinguished career as an intellectual. It was not till several years later that she wrote *The Mill on the Floss,* yet one's criticism of that novel must be that it is too much the work of Maggie Tulliver. It is too much written from inside Maggie, whose yearnings and exaltations and spiritual intensities are offered just as Maggie felt them and might have offered them; out of relation, that is, to any maturer experience. The clear autobiographical identity of Maggie with George Eliot is peculiarly poignant in the earlier part of the book, in the rendering of the stresses suffered by the sensitive and gifted child in that bucolic milieu—notably of the girl's flinching sense, continually played on by obtuse adult comment and allusion, that she decidedly lacks beauty and attractiveness by the criteria of the immediate community that is decisive for her. The significance is not less poignant when we note that there is one great difference between Maggie and the actual George Eliot: Maggie enacts in adolescence the ugly duckling transformation; the deplored "Gypsy" traits (her Dodson kin are blond) turn into the commanding beauty of a magnificent brunette.

There is warrant enough for finding here, in so autobiographical a novel, an element of daydream—self-indulgent, self-compensatory—on the part of the author (for George Eliot's unhappy sense of her lack of any obvious feminine charm there is plenty of evidence from her life). And there is a signficance for the critic in the association of this daydream element with the uncritical presentment of Maggie's yearning for a steady spiritual exaltation, an intensity that, with the potency of being in love, shall transfigure life and give it an irresistible purpose. The genius of the great George Eliot manifests itself in the power and intransigence of her sense of the real (I called her, above, Tolstoyan). The disconcerting thing about her is the way in which, after she has achieved what one can only call the full possession of her genius, there should still remain in her an unreduced enclave of immaturity. It is there in *Middlemarch,* sorting oddly with the strength of that novel—there in the heroine Dorothea. Considering the valuation of Dorothea's idealism we are expected to endorse, and the relations with Ladislaw we are expected to find convincing and touching, a sense of the real, we tell ourselves, is precisely what *this* George Eliot is deficient in:

> "No, I don't think that," said Dorothea. "I have no longings. . . . But I have a belief of my own, and it comforts me."
>
> "What is that?" said Will, rather jealous of the belief.
>
> "That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil—widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower."

—The nobility is tainted with self-indulgence.

THERE is no dangerous heroine in *Daniel Deronda.* There is, however, a significant agreement that the hero is not a man. This judgment, in its negative intention, is a denial that Deronda can be credited with any reality, let alone the convincingness necessary to a major *dramatis persona.* But it registers something positive at the same time: the constatation that Deronda, though he cannot be called a creation, is very positively feminine—very

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positively a feminine expression. Who, contemplating the ardors, the emotional intensities, the idealistic exaltations that are focused in him can think "cold" an apt word for this failure of the creative writer? The high-powered intellectual, with her disinterested and clear-sighted humanity, is certainly very much engaged in the Zionist part, but when we contemplate Deronda we cannot ignore the presence in it of something strongly, and very questionably, emotional; a powerful, but equivocal, element of inspiration (as it must have seemed to the author, for it brought with it a drive of energy).

The nature of the inspiration is given us when we are told (characteristically) of Deronda's "sweet irresistible hopefulness that the best of human possibilities might befall him—the blending of a complete personal love in one current with a larger duty." Deronda here indulges himself in a more inclusive hopefulness than Maggie or Dorothea in their exalted moods—or Deronda himself—tends to cultivate in full consciousness. In his capacity of spiritual adviser he tells Gwendolen, "the refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which builds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and interests," and the essential—the sufficient —"enthusiasm" he proposes for himself is that which he acquires when he discovers he is a Jew, and, having made the acquaintance of his mother, comes back from the interview "with something better than freedom." This "larger duty," a permanent intoxication, all-sufficient and transfiguring, is the "religious" exaltation longed for by Maggie and Dorothea. But Deronda himself is shown as realizing his "sweet hopefulness" to the full: he wins his Mirah, and so is able to identify "the larger duty," the "enthusiasm," with a "complete personal love." This imagined life of sustained and wholly satisfying intensity George Eliot now conceives as a man's (we are to take him as the beau ideal of masculinity). We clearly haven't here the direct simplicity of autobiographically personal expression, but the George Eliot predominant, all the same, is not the great genius, with her command of creative impersonality—nor creative at all: the attempt to dramatize the less creative "inspiration," these dubiously emotional and idealistic impulsions, in a hero could produce only unreality. But George Eliot is oddly, and significantly, unaware of the difference between this and the wonderfully vital art of which there is such a wealth in *Daniel Deronda*. The fact that her intellectual powers have been so strenuously and congenially engaged in the development of the Zionist theme of which Deronda is the focus is a strongly favoring condition of this unawareness.

THE point I have been coming to is that one must not, as Henry James with so many other critics tends to do, make her possession of these intellectual powers responsible for the defeat, or abeyance, of the great novelist in the Zionist part. It is not the great intellect that is in control there, but something emotional—something that, in part at least, is a paradoxical immaturity, and uses the intellectual powers for its own purposes. Properly, these powers belong with the superb intelligence that (carrying with it an inwardness of self-knowledge and a fine mastering sense of the real) is to the great artist wholly a strength, an essential manifestation of the novelist's genius. And one cannot but recognize that as present in the part of the novel we judge to be unsuccessful they compel admiration. The failure, in fact, though the upshot of one's critical notes is clear and unequivocal, is not the altogether simple case I have perhaps suggested. There is something in what, in the "Conversation," Henry James suggests through the mouth of Constantius:

> Gwendolen's history is admirably typical—as most things are with George Eliot: it is the very stuff that human life is made of. . . . The universe forcing itself with a slow, inexorable pressure into

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> a narrow, complacent, and yet after all extremely sensitive mind, and making it ache with the pain of the process—that is Gwendolen's story. And it becomes completely characteristic in that her supreme perception that the world is whirling past her is in the disappointment not of a base but of an exalted passion. The very chance to embrace what the author is so fond of calling a "larger life" seems refused to her. She is punished for being narrow, and she is not allowed a chance to expand. Her finding Deronda pre-engaged to go to the East and stir up the race-feeling of the Jews strikes me as a wonderfully happy invention. The irony of the situation, for poor Gwendolen, is almost grotesque, and it makes one wonder whether the whole heavy structure of the Jewish question was not built up by the author for the express purpose of giving its proper force to this particular stroke.

Certainly George Eliot intended such a tragic irony. And the peculiar quality of her genius asserts itself in her conceiving the climax of Gwendolen's tragedy in those terms—as enacted in that situation. We cannot miss the intention, or fail to be impressed by the conception. Impressed; but we are not convinced with the conviction brought by great art. The conception remains an intention, and no amount of the exalted emotional energy brought up by George Eliot with the Zionist theme can generate the kind of reality we have in the Gwendolen-Grandcourt part. It will not after all do to say that she "built up" the "whole heavy structure of the Jewish question" solely in order "to give its proper force to this particular stroke": Constantius offers to credit her with an impersonal wholeness of creative impulse and conception that is certainly lacking here. She expanded herself on the "Jewish question" because (partly, at least) of a personal emotional need working in ways of which she is not sufficiently aware, and in this the whole Deronda function is involved. Even when, in her presentment of the Zionist theme, she seems most impersonally the nobly earnest intellectual—and there is a great deal that is very impressive—the truly noble Victorian by whom we are impressed is the character and the powerful mind, but not the genius. George Eliot would not have found the Zionist "enthusiasm" she offers to imagine as the all-sufficient life-significance for Deronda of any avail for herself—nor would she, in actuality, any equivalent religion of race or heredity. She cannot, in fact, really do the imagining she undertakes; she is not (for all her illusion to the contrary) engaged in her wholeness—not engaged as an artist must be in order to create. The living intelligence that goes with her creativity would have told her that, in finding it possible to enlist her intellectual powers in the proposing of such substitutes for religion (her poetic drama, *The Spanish Gypsy,* in which the heroine, informed unexpectedly by a stranger that she is his, a Gypsy's, daughter, realizes thereupon that it is her life's purpose and meaning to serve the Gypsy people, is another document), she was showing herself—conscientious, but profoundly religious agnostic as she was—too much a Victorian, too much the product of a local and limiting climate.

The failure of creativity, the absence of the great novelist, is very apparent at the tragic climax, the parting between Deronda and Gwendolen, where it is calamitous. Too often we have had to comment that Deronda, insofar as he is anything, is a prig. What are we to say about his valedictory offer of consolation to Gwendolen (see the close of chapter LXIX), to whom it has just been broken that he is about to marry Mirah? Yet what else could he have said? What intimate and poignant relation could be convincingly shown between a mere emotionalized postulate, which is what Deronda is, and a concrete individual who is as real to us as Gwendolen? Yet we cannot eliminate the postulate from an account of the superlatively successful rendering of Gwendolen's tragedy—George Eliot's greatest achievement. Nevertheless, that he is not a created real-

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ity hardly matters, hardly constitutes a serious qualification, when we are admiring the great novel, *Gwendolen Harleth,* that we can't help thinking of trying to separate off: it merely has a rough edge.

One might be inclined to call the prepotence, more or less subtle, in the Deronda part, of the element of nobly feminine self-indulgence the price paid, the self-compensation, for the sustained impersonality and maturity of the rest. But to do so would be to imply that one feels suggestions of strain, or of difficult achievement, about that triumph of the artist. The contrary is true: there is an effect of creative freedom and inevitability; the complete genius in its wholeness is here; the born novelist, possessed by her themes and in full possession of them, and drawing on an inexhaustible charge of relevant experience and observation. It can be said that Gwendolen did not, as heroine, present George Eliot with any tempting opportunity for insidious self-identification. It must at the same time, then, be said that in George Eliot's treatment of this girl so different from herself there is no lack of the inwardness given by sympathy. Her power to achieve tragic art through the impersonality of imaginative insight was shown impressively in *Felix Holt,* in the Transome drama, where Mrs. Transome is highborn, handsome, imperious, and not in the least idealistic. The nature of George Eliot's genius in its creative wholeness is perhaps best brought out by a comparative reference back from Gwendolen to Rosamond Vincy of *Middlemarch.* In some ways the likeness between them might appear very close. Both are spoilt beauties, exhibiting an extreme narrowness of feminine egoism. The most characteristic physical gesture attributed to them, an expression of proud elegance and grace, is the same for both: they "turn" their long necks. But the charming Rosamond in her pretty self-centered complacency is merely stupid, unteachable, and destructive. George Eliot, while not absolving Lydgate from responsibility for his fate, sees Rosamond, whose potent attraction for him she presents with an intelligent woman's exasperation, as the snare into which he falls. Rosamond has no potentiality but to continue to be her trivial self—that is, to be destructive to a talented man. Gwendolen, on the other hand, not merely "has a root of conscience in her"; she is capable of being made, as an individual study, the focus of a study of a whole society. It is above all of this part of *Daniel Deronda* that James's Constantius is speaking when he says: "I delighted in its deep rich English tone, in which so many notes seem blended together." The envious admiration felt by the author of *The Portrait of a Lady* was natural; George Eliot's rendering of English life has an obvious advantage in intimacy over his—which came later. But hers is more than a matter of providing the drama of Gwendolen's fate with a "deep rich" background: the intimacy, the inwardness, the apparently free abundance, are necessary for the development of the moral-psychological—or spiritual—theme. What is Tolstoyan about George Eliot is the way her preoccupation with the individual conscience and her intense conviction of its responsibility go with an insight, not only into the part played by social pressure in such a case as Gwendolen's, but into the extent to which what in the individual passes as a moral sense may itself be the representative of mere convention, the superficial but robust product of a climate or environment:

> She had only to collect her memories, which proved to her that "anybody" regarded illegitimate children as more rightfully to be looked shy on and deprived of social advantages than illegitimate fathers. The verdict of "anybody" seemed to be that she had no reason to concern herself greatly on behalf of Mrs. Glasher and her children.

Gwendolen, beautiful and self-willed, is shown as commanding at home, from

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her charming and diffident mother and her sisters, the deference of the spoilt child. Nothing in the "County" society in which they move tends, at any rate by inducing a growth of moral perception, to correct or counter the spoiling. Its tendency may be fairly represented by the Rector, Mr. Gascoigne, Gwendolen's uncle and acting father. It would be easy to assemble quotations to make it seem that George Eliot's presentment of him was satirical. Actually it is essential to her purpose that she should make us share her sense of him as a fine figure of a man and an admirable person, and she beyond any question does. The social historian of the English 19th century must be able to appreciate that there may be snobbery that isn't merely ignoble, and George Eliot's presentment of the Rector—she performs the novelist's historical function supremely well—deserves to be a classical illustration:

> This match with Grandcourt presented itself to him as a sort of public affair; perhaps there were ways in which it might even strengthen the Establishment. To the Rector, whose father (nobody would have suspected it, and nobody was told) had risen to be a provincial corn-dealer, aristocratic heirship resembled regal heirship in excepting its possessor from the ordinary standard of moral judgments. Grandcourt, the almost certain baronet, the probable peer, was to be ranged with public personages, and was a match to be accepted on broad general grounds national and ecclesiastical.

There is irony here, but this is not satire—not the satirizing of hypocrisy. Nor is it when, as the upshot of his admonition to his oddly hesitant niece, he tells her:

> "Then, my dear Gwendolen, I have nothing further to say than this: you hold your fortune in your own hands—a fortune such as rarely happens to a girl in your circumstances—a fortune in fact which almost takes the question out of the range of mere personal feeling, and makes your acceptance of it a duty. If Providence offers you power and position—especially when unclogged by any conditions that are repugnant to you—your course is one of responsibility, into which caprice must not enter."

The educative potency of the conventional moral climate as well as its pressure is powerfully evoked. In this environment, against this background, takes place the fatal convergence that seems to rob Gwendolen of choice. To escape service with the Bishop's wife she confidently seeks her interview with Herr Klesmer, and gets her crushing humiliation. The whole painful scene (chapter XXIII), poignant in its personal drama and illustrating the intelligence of George Eliot's critical attitude toward English society and civilization, is wonderfully done. The place of the Arts and the Artist in England—in Klesmer, who is so much more than a successful figure of comedy, that theme is brought up by a novelist who shows herself admirably qualified to deal with it. I am pretty sure, in fact, that James found in *Daniel Deronda* the subject and the background of *The Tragic Muse*.

Shattered and at a dead-end from this interview, Gwendolen receives Grandcourt's request for permission to call on her. How can she fail to be elated?

> But no! she was going to refuse him. Meanwhile, the thought that he was coming to be refused was inspiriting: she had the white reins in her hands again; there was a new current in her frame, reviving her from the beaten-down consciousness in which she had been left by the interview with Klesmer. She was not now going to crave an opinion of her capabilities; she was going to exercise her power.

The subtleties of her psychology are done with a compelling inwardness. But when we come to such things as the scene between Gwendolen and Grandcourt (chapter XXVII) we see that it is unequivocally on the *novelist* that the stress must fall: the artist with the specific genius and a complete command of her

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art. I am thinking not only of the consummateness of the dialogue, rendering as it does with such perfect delicacy and precision of dramatic power the play of the opposed forces beneath it, and having for upshot Gwendolen's almost involuntary acceptance of Grandcourt's adroit proposal; I am thinking too of the immediate reality of the whole drama, the way in which the movements and gestures of the actors are *seen*.

For other notable examples I would specify the interview (chapter xxx) at Gadsmere between Grandcourt and Mrs. Glasher when he goes to get the diamonds, and the successive scenes between Grandcourt and Gwendolen and Gwendolen and Lush in chapter xlviii. But it would be a mistake to suggest that there could be any separating off of the directly dramatic from the other modes that a novelist of George Eliot's scope has to use. It is time to insist that as an artist and technician she has a flexibility, and in her command of the varied resources of her native language a felicity, with which she doesn't always get credited. To say "analysis" in connection with *Daniel Deronda* is perhaps to suggest the abstract and Germanic prose that one may find in the less successful parts of the book. But this is analysis:

> Had Grandcourt the least conception of what was going on in the breast of his wife? He conceived that she did not love him: but was that necessary? She was under his power, and he was not accustomed to soothe himself, as some cheerfully-disposed persons are, with the conviction that he was very generally and justly beloved. But what lay quite away from his conception was, that she could have any special repulsion for him personally. How could she? He himself knew what personal repulsion was—nobody better: his mind was much furnished with a sense of what brutes his fellow-creatures were, both masculine and feminine; what odious familiarities they had, what smirks, what modes of flourishing their handkerchiefs, what costume, what lavender-water, what bulging eyes, and what foolish notions of making themselves agreeable by remarks which were not wanted. In this critical view of mankind there was an affinity between him and Gwendolen before their marriage, and we know that she had been attractingly wrought upon by the refined negations he presented to her. Hence he understood her repulsion for Lush. But how was he to understand or conceive her present repulsion for Henleigh Grandcourt?

There is much of this kind in *Daniel Deronda*, and to remind ourselves as we read that the author has a great mastery of living dialogue is to have no sense of paradox: this analysis is in the most sensitive touch with the perception and the intuition. They seem, in fact, to be present, and the prose that renders them is (to use James's distinction) the "poet's" rather than the "philosopher's." It is the prose of the novelist who can do Gwendolen's flights and sallies and high-spirited femininities so supremely well.

WHAT, one may ask, is the great advantage this novelist has over the Henry James who admired her, testifying to his admiration with *The Portrait of a Lady?* One can answer that she knows her English world better than James knows any world, and has a corresponding advantage in respect of her heroine. But that is not all. It is time to make again the point that she was the author of *Silas Marner*, which had come out fifteen years before. *Silas Marner* was written by one whose youth and upbringing were very different from James's, and not in any world of sophisticated manners and brilliant conversation. Its classical quality is bound up with that; it lies in her grasp of basic human need, the essential conditions of maintaining a distinctively human life, the fundamentals of civilized human society as seen and felt in a traditional rustic community. From *Silas Marner* Hardy got his prompting to the Wessex novels.

This art is very different from that in

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which George Eliot sets forth the tragedy of Gwendolen Harleth; but there is a continuity. Or rather, to revert to my earlier way of putting it, in *Daniel Deronda* the author of *Silas Marner* is still there: there is no incongruity in the suggestion that the Hardy who owed so much to *Silas Marner* could be very positively in resonance with the later book too. And he actually did, I think, take the use of the name of the old West Saxon kingdom, Wessex, from *Daniel Deronda,* where also (a congruous fact) he would find that manifest influence of Greek tragic thought which undoubtedly played its part in the suggestiveness that George Eliot's work in general had for him. Hybris and Nemesis can be clearly felt in Gwendolen's tragedy, and the kind of implicit creative response to the pondered impact of Greek religious drama exemplified here was as natural to George Eliot when she was presenting the fate of the young lady in sophisticated society as when she was dealing with the lives of the actors in *Silas Marner.* It is an intimately related point that she felt her sophisticated society—felt it in a charged and realizing way—as belonging to and dependent on the full context of life, traditional, economic, unsophisticated, and necessary, evoked by the name "Wessex."

The clinching touch may fitly be a reference to the importance of George Eliot for D. H. Lawrence, who studied her closely. He recognized the intimate bearing of her work on that to which he himself was committed—he the pioneering novelist whose own exploration of the individual psyche was inseparable from a preoccupation with the changing historic society to which it belonged, and whose interest in the finer creative expressions of civilized man was that of one who knew, by birth and upbringing, the world of the basic labor, traditional and industrial, by which civilization was sustained.

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

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A COMMENTARY REPORT

THE SOUTH'S PUPIL PLACEMENT LAWS

Newest Weapon Against Integration

RALPH LEE SMITH

If school integration in the South were to continue at its 1959 rate, it would take four thousand years for all Southern Negro children to achieve their right to equal educational opportunity. Between 1954—when the Supreme Court ruled that such equal opportunity was in fact guaranteed them by the Constitution—and 1958, a total of 376,000 Southern Negro schoolchildren were enrolled in integrated schools, and almost all of these were in the border states. In 1959, the total of 376,000 went up by only 511 additional children—despite the desegregation of 87 more school districts. To date, counting the progress initially made in the border states, only 6 per cent of the South's Negro schoolchildren are attending integrated schools—and further progress has now been slowed to a trickle.

In its efforts to circumvent the Supreme Court's ruling and prevent or retard integration, the South has tried many approaches: school-closing laws, "interposition," scholarship aid for those parents who preferred to send their children to all-white schools, anti-NAACP laws, economic reprisal, intimidation, and violence. But only one technique—the pupil placement law—has met with substantial success in the courts. The technique is now clearly emerging as the South's major weapon in maintaining school segregation.

The placement laws are designed to perpetuate segregation by integrating the fewest possible number of Negro students whenever federal action forces the issue. The first law was enacted by North Carolina on March 30, 1955, and refined by amendments the following year. Virginia passed the second placement law on September 29, 1956. And in 1957, after the North Carolina law had withstood a major court challenge, the other Southern states rushed to get on the bandwagon. At this writing, the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, and the city of Atlanta, Georgia, have all adopted placement laws, and it appears that other states and cities will follow suit.

The clear intention of non-compliance and defiance is being revealed in the hard-core Southern states; there the pupil placement laws are an actual and potential tool of great efficacy. In Arkansas, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida, only about 500 Negro students out of a total of 800,000 have been integrated—a tiny fraction of one per cent. But even more significantly, in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, of a combined total of 1,400,000 Negro students, *none* have been integrated; nor do the leaders of any of these states intend to integrate a single school. Because the constitutionality of the placement laws has been upheld, it is thus almost certain that no additional major integration—comparable, say, to that which occurred during the first several years after the Supreme Court ruling—can now take place for at least a number of years. These facts no doubt deepen Negro unrest; but they also pose for the nation as a whole the question of whether it seriously intends to assist the Negroes in securing the rights they thought they had won in 1954.

RALPH LEE SMITH is the author of *The Health Hucksters* to be published this winter by Thomas Y. Crowell. The present article is his first contribution to COMMENTARY.

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The specific provisions and requirements of the placement laws vary widely from state to state, but the purpose is the same everywhere: the establishment of machinery that will control the school assignment of pupils in such a way as to prevent Negro children from transferring to white schools, or that will limit such transfers, whenever total segregation becomes untenable, to a token number. Theoretically, the laws apply to the placement of all pupils, black and white, in all schools; but actually, intended as tools of racial discrimination, they are not invoked until a Negro pupil applies for a transfer to a white school. The board of that particular white school receives the application, and within a month or two renders its decision—which, in almost every case, refuses the request on the grounds that the applicant does not meet the criteria specified by the local placement law. These criteria are extremely diverse in degree of vagueness and subjectivity; and none refers overtly to race. Ranging from psychological to economic considerations, they include: the psychological qualification of the pupil for both the instruction and the milieu of the white school; the effects of the pupil's admission upon the academic progress of other students; the effect of the admission upon prevailing academic standards; the suitability of established curricula for particular pupils; the psychological effect on the pupil of attendance at the school; the adequacy of a pupil's preparation; the possibility of breaches of the peace or ill will or economic retaliation within the community; the possibility or threat of friction or disorder among the pupils or other persons involved; "sociological and psychological factors as will prevent any condition of socio-economic class consciousness among pupils attending any given school"; and, finally, "other relevant matters."

To oppose the school board's decision, an applicant must utilize the machinery for administrative appeal provided by most of the placement laws. Several months are usually needed to exhaust all these possibilities; thus, in most cases, a child is kept from attending the white school for the year he had applied simply by default. When the final administrative decision is at last made, it too is most often negative. But only after this decision can the applicant turn to the courts. There he must prove that the authorities have applied the placement criteria illegally —he must prove, in other words, that he was excluded from a particular school because of his race. More time is consumed in filing a complaint, waiting for the date of the hearing, and then waiting again (approximately six weeks) for the judge's decision. Dilatory motions, frequently employed by school authorities, can consume as much as six or seven months. If the judge finds that the applicant has failed to prove discrimination, he must then appeal to a higher court. On such appeals, the final verdict—which, of course, may not grant the transfer—can take two or three years.

Several actual cases will illustrate the difficulties, the expenditures of money and time, that are involved in applying for transfer under the current placement laws. Last summer, in Durham, North Carolina, the parents of 160 Negro children applied for transfers for them (a large number of these applicants were secured through the ceaseless and courageous efforts of the local NAACP). The school board found that, according to the placement laws, none of the applicants qualified. The parents appealed the decisions with the help of an NAACP Legal and Educational Defense Fund lawyer. The school board granted a hearing in October, after the school year had begun. Not all the parents—about half their number—were able to attend on the night of the hearing, and each parent who did attend was interrogated. The board subsequently announced that the children of all those parents who failed to appear were automatically disqualified. However, it also rejected the applications of all the children whose parents were there, for, said the board, not one pupil met the criteria of the law.

Up to 1959, Virginia's state placement board had passed on 500,000 pupil enrollments without finding a single Negro student who qualified for a transfer to a white school. When, in 1959, an incredulous federal judge in Norfolk threatened the board with a contempt action, the board gravely went over its files and finally found four Negroes in Norfolk who qualified; the court was satisfied. This year, 1960, the board approved the transfers of another sixteen Negro students among school sys-

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tems in three Virginia communities, two of which had already been desegregated by court order.

Records of pupil placement actions in Alexandria, Virginia, produced in connection with a parents' suit, reveal the detailed workings of placement laws. If an applicant's IQ was below the norm for his age, he was turned down on the grounds that the work in the white school would be too difficult for him. But if the applicant's IQ was above the average for his age, he was also turned down—because he would be "happier" in the "position of outstanding leadership" that he enjoyed in the lower-norm Negro school. If, finally, the applicant's IQ was normal for his age, other grounds for exclusion were adduced. In Case Number 4 in the series, for example, where the mental age of the applicant was found to be commensurate with his chronological age, the ruling stated:

> He [the applicant] lives at the west intersection of North Columbus Street and Powhatan Street—geographically he is equidistant from Houston [the Negro school] and Ficklin [the white school]. It is estimated that the actual distances which have to be walked, because of the way the streets run, the distance to Houston is somewhat shorter [*sic*].

For this reason, the applicant was denied admission to Ficklin school.

The Little Rock school board, which began its third year of integrated classes this year, has placed thirteen Negro students in Central and Hall High Schools—four more than when the schools were integrated three years ago. (As a matter of fact, the number had dropped to seven in 1959.) In June 1960 the board had 74 Negro reassignment applications for the fall 1960 semester. The board has already announced that it did not plan to permit any desegregation on the junior-high level, which of course means that it does not intend to discover any qualified applicants among those seeking entrance at that level. At this writing, the board has reviewed and rejected 39 of the 74 transfer applications.

MARION A. WRIGHT, vice president of the Southern Regional Council, has called pupil placement laws "legalistic horseplay" to keep Negro children out of white schools. The NAACP regards many features of the laws as unconstitutional, and maintains further that in theory and practice they place unwarranted and usually insuperable burdens on the average Negro child seeking the educational equality supposedly guaranteed to him by both the Constitution and the 1954 Supreme Court ruling. With this view many legal experts agree, and in fact, the success of the laws in the courts has aroused considerable astonishment among the experts. In 1957 a suit was brought by a group of North Carolina parents asking that their children not be required to go through the procedures of the state's pupil placement law to secure educational equality. The Fourth Circuit Court ruled against them, and the Supreme Court affirmed the decision. A second major test occurred in 1958 when a suit testing Alabama's pupil placement law came before the Supreme Court. The Court, in a one-sentence opinion, upheld the Fifth Circuit's ruling that the provisions of the law were in themselves constitutional. (The Fifth Circuit has also found Arkansas' law constitutional on its face.) In 1959 the Supreme Court denied another North Carolina suit which also sought to gain admission for a Negro child to a white school without resorting to full procedure of the placement law. And in a third North Carolina case, the Supreme Court upheld the Fourth Circuit's ruling that because Montgomery County, North Carolina, was operating under a pupil placement law, it did not have to devise a general desegregation plan.

The Supreme Court's upholding of the Alabama pupil placement law was profoundly disillusioning to many Southern Negroes. To begin with, placement laws from their inception had prevented "class action" suits. The cases that resulted in the 1954 Supreme Court ruling were "class actions"—that is, the Court's decision became a binding rule for all cases. But under pupil placement laws, each individual aspirant for educational equality is on his own, and is pitted against all the power and pressure that the community and state can bring against him. Even if he finally wins in court, the next applicant faces the same hurdles and barriers. The Supreme Court's decision affirmed this state of affairs.

Lawyers and civil rights experts believed

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that the decision also had expressed or implied the following:

1. That all applicants must complete the full administrative procedures specified by such laws before seeking relief in the courts;
2. That as far as the Supreme Court is concerned, pupil placement laws constitute a statewide or community-wide integration program; and, finally,
3. That the courts would not require general desegregation programs where pupil placement laws were in force.

In practice, the constellation of both legal and social power arrayed against the individual Negro pupil and his family prevents most from even applying. Many of those communities in which pupil placement laws are in effect stand ready to apply the severest economic pressures against any Negro parents who file applications on behalf of their children. Moreover, children who win in court face, at best, cool receptions when they come to school—in the lower grades especially—and even the most courageous Negro parents hesitate to visit such a situation upon their children. Thus, it is often difficult for Negro leadership to get any parents to file applications. And to further diminish their number, when the NAACP does make an organized attempt to secure at least token integration, it fights primarily for those applications which indicate the most promise of establishing the discriminatory intention of the laws.

Among the effects within the Southern Negro community of the placement laws and the ensuing various court decisions has been a reaction against the old liberal-legal approach to securing civil rights which has dominated its thinking for a generation. The NAACP, the champion of this approach, accordingly has lost stature in the eyes of many Negroes. Actually, of course, one of the purposes of the placement laws has been to "break the NAACP's back" by imposing an impossible burden of litigation as the price for even modest progress in school integration. It was the NAACP's long and relentless legal pressure in the first place, after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, that brought the various placement laws into being; and now the NAACP is making use of every legal means to weaken these laws and ultimately destroy their effectiveness. But meanwhile, the pupil placement roadblock remains substantially effective, and Negro unrest has grown rapidly. It hardly seems too much to say that the lunch counter sit-ins were engendered by the legal experts who wrote the South's pupil placement laws.

In some instances, though, the Circuit Courts are already beginning to take a closer look at the pupil placement laws. Several recent court rulings suggest that the wall created by the Supreme Court's favorable 1958 decision on the Alabama statute may not be impenetrable. In 1959, the Fifth Circuit, in a Florida case, held that pupil placement laws did not automatically relieve local school boards from the obligation of beginning a "reasonable start toward full compliance" with the 1954 school decision. In another Florida case this year, the court also ruled that pupil placement criteria must be applied to all students in order to be constitutional—not just to Negro pupils seeking transfer to white schools. In another 1960 case in the Fourth Circuit, the court held that Negroes need not necessarily exhaust administrative procedures under pupil placement laws to seek a decree for a positive desegregation program. In Alexandria, Virginia, the Fourth Circuit warned against the application of the pupil placement criteria solely to Negroes seeking transfer, and further warned against use of the laws to perpetuate separate white and Negro school districts. Thus, these recent rulings suggest conflicts of fact and interpretation which may ultimately result in Supreme Court decisions of broadly applicable rules of law.

Yet meanwhile, the placement laws remain in force with court blessing. Six years after the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools violate the Constitution, the Negro who wants equality of educational opportunity for his child often stands substantially alone. In the next few years, as the intention of full defiance or token compliance becomes the clear position of the hard-core South, the nation will find itself coming closer to a genuine decision on whether or not it really intends the Supreme Court's ruling of 1954 to become the law of the land. The effect of the pupil placement laws is to focus and sharpen this decision.

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VARIETIES OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

FRANCIS GOLFFING

For over three decades now Professor Ludwig von Mises has, with admirable consistency, pursued his passion for changing the world by making it stand still. A distinguished economist and learned in many fields, he has been one of the chief promoters of neo-conservatism both in Europe and in this country: what passes for conservative thought today—as distinguished from conservative business or politics—is heavily indebted to von Mises' pioneering effort, whether or not it realizes and consciously acknowledges that debt. And in addition, some of our brighter industrialists and politicians are likewise in his debt, a debt which they have as a rule freely admitted. But I am not concerned here with von Mises' role as economic adviser or with his technical achievements as an economic theorist and analyst of specific market phenomena. What interests me is von Mises the philosopher: the general theory of man (praxeology) he has developed as an underpinning for his theory of catallactics, i.e. the economic process.

The essays in his new book (rather, his old book, for these pieces were published in German as far back as 1933) make good reading. Their tenor is polemical throughout, the diatribe chiefly directed against Sombart and other "historicists." In those early days von Mises regarded praxeology as a science methodologically close to the natural sciences, a position from which he has long since departed. (Today, he presents praxeology as a science *sui generis*, akin to nothing else except, perhaps, deductive logic.) But his basic objections to his liberal colleagues, sociologists as well as economists, have not changed a whit over the years. They are today exactly what they were then: liberal economics is the gravedigger of human dignity and freedom; the so-called liberals have usurped a name which properly belongs to the conservatives; the liberal (or socialist) mind lacks rigor, plays fast and loose with logic, and has not the faintest notion of those epistemological premises which determine all human action.

The reader who is eager to learn from von Mises what these tremendous epistemological premises are, is likely to be disappointed. The volume *Epistemological Problems* modernizes and refines upon the famous *Methodenstreit* precipitated about 1890 by two economists—Gustav von Schmoller and Carl Menger—and now settled, unless I am much mistaken, in favor of Max Weber and the historical approach to socio-economic questions. In any case, that battle was not waged over an epistemological issue in the strict sense but over the method to be employed in the study of human behavior and over the still undefined status of social science in the hierarchy of the sciences. Epistemology deals traditionally with the origin and limits of human knowledge—why we perceive what we perceive—and not with its *modus operandi*. Yet von Mises shows an exclusive interest

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FRANCIS GOLFFING's essays (and verse) have appeared from time to time in COMMENTARY. The present discussion is based on two recent books: Ludwig von Mises, *Epistemological Problem of Economics* (Van Nostrand, 239 pp., $5.50) and Wilhelm Roepke, *A Humane Economy* (Regnery, 312 pp., $5.00); and also on von Mises' most important volume, *Human Action*, published by Yale University Press in 1949. Mr. Golffing, who teaches at Bennington College, is at work on a book on "Utopia"; and Macmillan will shortly issue his *Selected Poems*.

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in the latter, while he disclaims any concern with the former.

Moreover, what he investigates in this book and the more ambitious volume, *Human Action,* is human conduct—specifically, economic conduct—both in its theoretical and practical aspects. Is praxeology a study of psychology, then, presented with a strong, if unstated, moral bias? Not at all, von Mises would say; psychology is none of his business, much less ethics. He wishes to present a theory of the market, founded on a sound theory of knowledge. We look again for that theory of knowledge, but it simply isn't there. There is some discussion, to be sure, of such subjects as monism and dualism, causality and teleology, a priori and a posteriori knowledge, but that whole methodological apparatus serves the sole purpose of stating the terms in which economic conduct must be described so as to make sense.

Does praxeology become a question of meaning, then, and thus an epistemological question after all? Not so. For von Mises vehemently denies that he is dealing with meanings, i.e. significances or interpretations; he is dealing with constant facts of experience, with those elements in human nature that are given, once and for all. "Praxeology claims for its theorems, within the sphere precisely defined in the underlying assumptions, universal validity for all human action." Closely considered, what von Mises' theory of cognition comes down to is a pre-Kantian a-priorism, a pre-Humean belief in strict causality, a pre-Hegelian contempt for historical process.

BE THAT as it may, Professor von Mises prides himself at least as much on the philosophical underpinnings of his economic theory as on that theory itself. To the extent that I can judge the latter, it derives straight from Adam Smith and Ricardo—the classical matrix—without taking account of the evolutionary (not to say revolutionary) possibilities that were built into the systems of these distinguished forerunners. Being either ignorant of dialectical operations, or merely blind to them, von Mises assumes that a body of thought can be reconstituted at will, *tel quel,* without regard for the changes wrought by time in human desires, the body politic, the particular culture. His doctrine of action is one massive attempt to provide a basis for his economic *idée fixe* that to people who are free agents the market situation will always present itself, fundamentally, in one and the same manner; consumers' fashions may vary but man's attitude toward consumers' goods—which to von Mises are the hub of the total universe of "desirables"*—remains unchanged; unless, of course, there happens to be some interference on the part of the state, or of a tyrant (the distinction between these two villains becomes negligible). Overborne by such restraints or interferences, men will temporarily abandon their rational desires and pay grudging homage to unreason; once the restraints are removed they will blithely return to their pristine ways. The only lesson they will have learned in the interval is that man is man, and the market the market. A tautology? By no means, for it is entirely conceivable—think, says von Mises, of the lesson of Hitler, Stalin, or Roosevelt—that man may be turned into a robot, the market into a treadmill.

Von Mises' economic rationale is doubtless more complex than that—he is a man of great learning—but hardly more profound. What gives it its character of shallowness is the absence of time as a felt dimension. Von Mises is both obsessed with time (his bugbears are history and historicism) and totally oblivious to its function. After divorcing economics from every ongoing historic process, he must have felt that a general theory of human action was needed to support this oddly insular structure, so as to make it respectable. It comes as no surprise that his science of man has turned out to be quite as insular as the economic theory it was designed to buttress, and considerably more ossified.

Before discussing von Mises' philosophy of action further I wish to make two things quite clear. First, I do not mean to accuse him of bad faith, as some liberals have done. I am convinced that he is a genuine con-

* "Only the economic goods are the substratum of action." And again: "The first and ultimate valuation of external things refers only to consumers' goods. All other things are valued according to the part they play in the production of consumers' goods." Intangible goods are outside von Mises' concern. In this respect his position coincides, ironically, with that of his arch enemy, Marx.

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servative, totally uninfluenced by fashions (though he may have created one) or by the interests of Big Capital (though his works have become the American capitalist's bible). In fact, next to his impressive learning, his incorruptibility seems to me to be his greatest asset. When I spoke of his need for a general theory of human action to make his economics respectable I meant something quite different. I meant that a writer of his intelligence must have realized quite early in his career how bizarre an economics is bound to look which has severed every tie with human motive as it is commonly understood, with the forces of social change and conflict (I'd just as soon avoid that dread word, *dialectic*), with every form of unconscious or "unreasonable" wish and desire. Given his predicament, two paths were open to him: either to introduce into his economic scheme the factor of time (in the form of history) and the factor of irrationality (in the form of a study of motivation) or to leave that scheme untouched, while underpinning it with a broad theory of knowledge and conduct which would make it not only credible but thoroughly solid. The first alternative had to be dismissed, since it would have resulted in a radical modification of his economic views and thus, eventually, in self-destruction. The second alternative proved both practicable and challenging, and the quixotic economist turned forthwith into the quixotic philosopher.

Read as a poem or other type of imaginative construction, von Mises' philosophy of action possesses considerable interest. It is well knit, eloquent, self-consistent, and eminently reasonable. It is also totally unoriginal, since it depends in all its essential features on either Hobbes or Aristotle. This dependence on earlier models spells the limit of von Mises' construction as a "poem": he has turned out an admirable pastiche, no more. But how about it as a piece of science, seeing that science (at least in its patient, day-to-day efforts and summings-up) can very well dispense with originality—is, indeed, likely to profit by that loss?

CLEARLY, what invalidates von Mises' claim to be a scientific observer of human action has nothing to do with questions of originality. It has to do with two points, one of them methodological, the other personal. First, it is highly dubious whether the study of human action will ever achieve genuine scientific status. The matter has been well put by one of the greatest scientists of our age, Max Planck. Planck argues that the human will (conscious decision-making, as distinguished from mere conation or *nisus*) is not wholly contained within that causal nexus which it is the business of the scientist to explore, since it represents an element of essential arbitrariness; an element of unpredictability or "uncertainty," depending on whether we view volition from within or in its consequences. (Ethology—the study of animal behavior—has a better chance of succeeding as a science. While it too faces serious epistemological problems, none of the difficulties in its way seem to be quite as radical and perplexing.) While Planck's view may grate on American ears—or on von Mises' Austrian-American ears, especially—I find myself in complete agreement with it.

The second difficulty is peculiar to von Mises and tied up with his passion for reductive thinking. Even if we grant him his desideratum that the science of human conduct should concern itself with the means of reasonable action rather than with the ultimate ends of action, we are not so much impressed by his modesty as appalled by his naivety. An operational study of human action which leaves out of account man's unconscious drives is at best fragmentary and at worst farcical. It is true that von Mises pays his respects to Freud, but he does so only in passing—in passing on, that is, to weightier matters; he makes it very clear that praxeology is not interested in this sort of thing, which may be all right for the clinician but has no serious bearing on our study of rational behavior. Action, then, is reduced to reasonable action; the notion that human beings are essentially rational is put forward with ultra-Cartesian certainty; and, finally, human rationality itself is drastically "reduced" by being presented as a mere gimmick: the ability to achieve a given and wholly arbitrary end with maximum economy of effort and to the optimal satisfaction of the doer. Marxism and state socialism, for example, are dismissed not because their ends are bad (though they cer-

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tainly are, on von Mises' view) but because of the inefficiency of the means they employ. It is entirely conceivable that someone (a specialist in human engineering, say) might want to dignify this kind of inquiry with the honorific name of "science"; how a writer of von Mises' intellectual calibre can perpetrate this (bona fide) imposture without batting an eye I find less easy to comprehend.

Von Mises is a very articulate writer, with a hard core of common sense. Even though there is no nourishing pulp around that core, one must admit that his style is forceful and full of verve. The reader is carried forward by the current of his prose; unless he watches closely he may not readily realize that the river carries, along with himself, a great mass of debris in the form of platitudes, half-truths, or downright distortions. Von Mises the controversialist is of the bludgeoning type. Since he lacks any imaginative insight into minds or processes different from his own, his polemic is highly ineffective; to be a good polemical writer it is not enough to have read your opponent, you must also be able to enter into his preoccupations—at least to some extent. This von Mises has steadfastly refused to do. To refer to Fourier's work as the "effusions of the poor lunatic Charles Fourier" betrays more than mere party prejudice: it betrays a complete lack of imagination. In the parlance of our (none too delicate) adolescents, it is *crude*. Since all his polemical utterances have been of this primitive sort, von Mises has over the years weakened his cause, rather than advanced it. Nobody but a fool or a bigot can accept his views of Marx or Hegel as serious, and von Mises will be stuck, I fear, with an audience composed entirely of organization men and professional red-baiters. I find this deplorable, for he once had it in him to crystallize a conservative elite in the United States, people one could have argued with, talked to. Instead he has succeeded in discrediting, by his arrogance and contumely, and by the absolute rigidity of his intellectual position, not the enemies he so indiscriminately abuses but his own cherished beliefs.

PROFESSOR ROEPKE'S *Humane Economy* is another kettle of fish: more attractive, but also much blander and for that reason a great deal less challenging. His book is marked by some insight, at least, into human nature and human affairs, and his general view of our predicament ill resigned rather than desperate: unlike von Mises, who wants to smash the clock, he only wants to turn it back, gently. While von Mises despises history and commits himself wholeheartedly to logic-chopping and system-building, Roepke is an old-fashioned historicist of the "organic" school: enthusiastic about decentralization, ready to accept change so long as it is not abrupt or radical, resolutely anti-utopian but sympathetic to certain unrealized possibilities of mankind. The only trouble with his view is that it merely echoes what several older conservatives—Edmund Burke, Gentz, Adam Mueller—have said, and said much better. There are times when he sounds like Metternich himself (or like Senator Goldwater addressing himself to our current campaign issues). In brief, the tenor of his argument is this: the life of modern man has become meaningless through loss of religious faith (needless to say, religious faith is tacitly identified with Christian faith); urbanization, though inevitable, has been an unmitigated evil; history, which made sense until 1789 (or possibly 1848) now no longer makes sense (because, I assume, it no longer is *true,* i.e. organic history); we must recover what we have lost before disaster strikes. On the subject of the free market and government interference Roepke holds substantially the same views as von Mises, though he expresses himself with infinitely greater restraint. Again, as in von Mises, socialism is seen as an acute danger to man's freedom, insidious in its milder forms, utterly soul-destroying in its blatant manifestations. No conceptual distinction is made between the statism of the right and that of the left: Lenin and Hitler, Franco and Mao Tse-tung.

There is much concern here, as there is in von Mises, with political and economic means—"techniques," in Roepke's language—and no serious discussion of ends. But clearly Professor Roepke's position on the means/ends question is quite different from that of von Mises: more genial perhaps but even less tenable. While von Mises dismisses the realm of ends altogether as impertinent, Roepke uncomfortably vacillates between

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God and man as the ultimate end of action (or, quite as unsatisfactorily, between God-in-man and man-in-God). In short, although both thinkers are dyed-in-the-wool conservatives, Roepke represents the neo-medieval position, complete with small-town and small-business sentiments, spiritual dependency and transcendence; von Mises the early Enlightenment notions of complete self-reliance and prudential conduct, with values drastically secularized and horizons infinitely open.

Both these economists not only hold important positions in their field but have been instrumental in our (the free world's) recent economic planning. Of their thorough competence in these matters I have no doubt. But it is one thing to propose sensible economic policies under prevailing conditions, quite another to inquire sensibly into these conditions themselves. Both Roepke and von Mises have been showered with praise by their conservative colleagues, not so much in their character as practical economists as in their character as social thinkers. This gives me—and should give anyone—pause. I fully agree with the suggestion made by F. A. Hayek and others that Roepke is no "middle-of-the-roader" (neither, God knows, is von Mises) but only because what these thinkers represent is the end of the road taken by intuitionism—well-meaning and often shrewd, but fundamentally naive—in exploring the human psyche and social action. They both pretend to have given serious thought to Hegel and Marx, but their polemics against these men are either invidious or trivial, in any case grossly simplifying. Their conceptions of the future are bland re-enactments of the past, disguised as energetic processes; all utopian thought is dismissed as crack-brained, and the French utopian socialists—if they are not passed over in silence—are either treated to abuse or patronizingly adduced to support some decentrist crotchet and so knock down Marx into the bargain. It is a superb irony that men who constantly pride themselves on their out-and-out realism should have so slight a grasp on the realities of our contemporary world and no grasp whatever on the presumptive realities of the world to come. Both have good things to say on certain economic aspects of our civilization (such as the mechanics of inflation and deflation, on imports and exports, even on government spending and taxation), but these insights are invariably surrounded by heady generalizations about the dignity of the individual or man's fundamental limitations or, at least in the case of Roepke, about non-negotiable spiritual values—stale, for the most part, and in some cases demonstrably wrong. *Ex oriente lux* is not one of my maxims and I am as aware as the next man of the viciousness of Communist dictatorship. But I am convinced—more convinced perhaps than some of my neighbors—that this is not the way to reinvigorate the dying morale of the West; that a mere paean to the past (Roepke) is not enough to meet the present social and economic challenge, any more than a Baconian-Hobbesian-Benthamite potpourri parading as a philosophy of human action (von Mises). If I had to choose between Roepke's antiquarian ideology and von Mises' quixotic, anti-ideological stance, I might very likely in the end declare for the latter. Fortunately, I am not presented with that choice, nor do I believe that the conflicts of tomorrow will be acted out in the arena in which Messrs. Roepke and von Mises have elected to disport themselves.

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LOUIS SULLIVAN—Artist in America

PAUL GOODMAN

LOUIS SULLIVAN AS HE LIVED* is necessarily a valuable book, for it is the first attempt at a proper biography of the "founder of modern architecture." Here, in conditions approximating our own times—Sullivan died in 1924—is the "American fate" of a gifted man, his meteoric early immense success ending in alcoholism and abandonment, wasted by the world and himself.

Willard Connely explains the arc of it as follows:

> It is often said that the Panic of 1893, causing the severance of Adler and Sullivan as partners, was the main factor in Louis Sullivan's fall. But the thwarting of his leadership in American architecture had by that time already been accomplished. . . . The disasters were rather the inclusion of the Eastern architects in the Chicago Fair [imposing a frigid Roman revival] . . . and the failure of the Fraternity Templars to build from Sullivan's design the first set-back skyscraper. These blows befell Sullivan in the same year, 1891, when he was only thirty-five. Young though he was, and great, the tide against him in America suffered only momentary check thereafter.

I do not think it is a sufficient explanation. Certainly bad luck and ruthless artistic reaction are powerful forces, as economic depression is a powerful force; but the gripping question in the biography of genius must always be: how does one man, e.g. Sullivan's disciple Frank Lloyd Wright, survive the inevitable adversity of originality, while another man succumbs? It is a poignant question especially in architecture which is, classically, an old man's art, for it takes seasoned experience and solid reputation to be safely daring and win the confidence of great clients for huge outlays of social capital. A man survives by "character," and character is a reflex of society and its mores at a more profound level than the events of 1891 or 1893. What gives the spirit support, and what betrays it? This, a typical failure of American society to fulfill itself in human flowers, ought to be the subject of the biography of Louis Sullivan. He was a much more important artist than, say, Scott Fitzgerald; he was more influential than Gershwin; and he put up a better drawn-out losing fight.

In gist, here is the story Connely tells us: Louis is a gifted and self-confident son of immigrants. He is truant at school but taught by a talented mother for whom he has the deepest affection. His father is a disciplinarian but the boy is often away with relatives. He is strongly attached to his older brother, Albert, a fine athlete. Already at twelve, he determines to be an architect. He gets a little academic training but quits it to work in some pretty good architectural offices, soon following his parents out to Chicago. It is a fresh America, with still irregular channels and plenty of opportunity, whether we read of the immigrant papa pioneering as a dancing master in genteel Boston and crude Chicago, or of the sons finding their first jobs. At eighteen Louis is off to Paris, but in one successful term he has gotten what he needs from the Beaux Arts system and returns home. He has fine

PAUL GOODMAN'S new collection of short stories, *Our Visit to Niagara* (Horizon Press), will be published this month, as will a second work, *Growing Up Absurd* (Random House).

* *Louis Sullivan as He Lived*, by Willard Connely (Horizon Press, 322 pp., $6.50).

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older friends who teach and help him, and he gets a place in the important office of Dankmar Adler who is really an engineer and needs as a partner an architect like Louis. From the first his decorations and design win public acclaim. He chooses brilliant assistants, like Frank Lloyd Wright. Designing the Auditorium in Chicago and other masterpieces, by thirty-five he is the acknowledged leader of the profession and, with his friend John Root, another modernist, he is the logical choice to build the World's Fair in the new American style. He makes a fabulous rose garden for himself in the South; he is a socialite and an important art collector. He has no sexual problems because he and his brother need only their mother, for whom they build a fine house. Then come the above-mentioned reverses: John Root dies, the American style is thwarted, jobs go to conventional and reactionary designers. There is a great and lasting business depression. He fires Wright. Adler, to fend for his own family, quits the firm. Louis alienates clients by his integrity and excessive pride. As soon as their mother dies, Albert, now forty-two, marries; and the new wife jealously severs him from Louis. Abandoned and beginning to be unemployed, Louis is now drinking. At forty-two, he himself marries, but before long this marriage goes on the rocks. He loses his rose garden, moves to ever cheaper hotels, has to quit the exclusive Club, loses his office and staff, and eventually undermines his powerful health with coffee (?) and liquor. The bright spots in his declining years are his European reputation, the loyal affection of Wright and other disciples, and his championing of the new functional architecture in his books and essays.

This tale is simply and not unfeelingly told, but it is thin. It does not explain the defeat of an artist and the genesis of a solitary drinker, because it lacks imagination both of the historical climate and of the facts of life. My aim in this article, therefore, is to cross-examine the story and point to details that the author omits or passes over too lightly.

START with what might seem a small point, yet it is crucial. Did nineteen-year-old Louis really get what he needed in five months in Paris? The question is not, as the biographer handles it, whether he could dispense with more traditional grounding; for Louis was bright and picked that up all around. But here was a young artist of an unmistakably advance-guard disposition. What was the relevant situation in Paris 1875? Manet was still embattled, Monet had painted his "Impression" and was working on "Gare St. Lazare" and heading into hot water, Cézanne was making his hard choice. These our author does not mention nor, in the entire book, does he allude to any modern artist except for a passing reference to the Barbizon painters who flourished in 1850. The case of the biographer, and seemingly of the youthful Sullivan, is exactly like that of Henry James who speaks of his Americans of "exquisite sensibility" abroad, but never presents them in any milieu of live sensibility. This makes the novelist merely absurd, but the youth suffers a disastrous isolation, for it is impossible to bear the burden of the advance-guard without heroic colleagues as teachers, exemplars, and accomplices. An American, e.g. Whistler, could find them in Paris. Wright had the advantage of, precisely, Adler and Sullivan. But indeed, between the lines of Connely's Paris story we can read a different story: Louis was homesick and terrified in that wicked city. He writes, "The can-can is simply disgusting"; and many years later he relates to his disciple the absolutely groundless fantasy that in five months in Paris he had wrecked his health for life, which I suppose we must take as a syphilophobia. With such anxieties, one does not have much inner strength for the attack on convention; but one is likely to be irascible and hypersensitive with smug clients.

Consider the "individual" ornamentation and the remarkable drawing that were Louis Sullivan's forte. Our author makes no effort to locate them culturally but attributes them, finally, to the "gifted hand of his mother." Perhaps so (her German Romantic flower-studies), but there was surely a strong dose of the pre-Raphaelite naturists, manifesto 1848, and also of Ruskin and Morris. Now this already conventional advance-guard decoration, boldly colored, often works wonders for Sullivan—in interiors, in small monuments, as a band or badge on a big unadorned surface, or, most importantly, in high-lighting and enlivening the great

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constructivist lines given to him by his "engineer" Adler. Yet it remains applied decoration; its relation to the architecture is problematical—sometimes exquisitely problematical, like a surprising smile. It is not an integral part of the building and the material, like the structural and strongly textured decoration of Wright; and certainly it has no relation to the functionalist theory. One has the impression that Sullivan never struggled through the radical problem of architecture, the relation of the designer and the builder; he still had a genteel prejudice that a "designer" was not a "carpenter."

The contrast with Wright is again instructive. Wright's "maternal influence," he tells us somewhere, was his mother's colored Froebel blocks and geometrical shapes, which at once sweeps us through the 19th century to the modern style of Mondrian or Albers; the "Aztec" manner that he hit on was architectural through and through; and his study of the Japanese taught him simplicity and void and the relation of inside and outside. Louis Sullivan was not thus entrenched in the influences relevant to modern architecture; he was caught in the transition from Victorianism.

Nevertheless Sullivan's miraculous effects —he was better than any pre-Raphaelite— do not come from nothing. They come from empathy with his flowers and snowflakes. Connely beautifully convinces us how deeply Sullivan studied his books of botany; he had a right to his organic theory of growth, even if it eventuated mostly in fantasy; whereas Frank Lloyd Wright's adaptation of it is strictly moralizing for the public. Correspondingly, Sullivan's literary style, though sentimental and overblown, is usually graceful and psychological, and often hits the nerve; whereas Wright's is hardly readable, pompously self-important. Although he ran a school, Wright had no proper disciples, because he was authoritarian; whereas Sullivan was a great teacher. Naturally Wright's hardness and wholeness had more capacity to survive. Sullivan was an inhibited lover, a fantasist.

Louis always needed older brothers to lean on. Connely importantly shows how brother Albert, who was in railroads, was essential for the Transportation Building at the Fair. But he strangely underestimates Dankmar Adler who was, in Sullivan's career, the chief of these strong males. He regards him as a business wheel-horse and superb acoustical engineer—he was both. (Sullivan himself said the same, after the partnership broke up: "Adler was essentially a technician, an engineer, a conscientious administrator." But Wright's opinion, in *A Testament,* was: "A great protestant, gray army engineer, Dankmar Adler, builder and philosopher.") But Adler was a formidable architect. In the Auditorium, for instance, though we admire Sullivan's fine Romanesque, it is the delicacy of the attenuated handling of the masonry that is the real professional triumph and makes the big total effect; the problems of the foundation are solved with great originality. And we can see in the early Ryerson Building (1884), where Sullivan is floundering in Egyptian "design," that the tremendous invention of the celebration of the steel skeleton framework, the posts in their glass shell, has already sprung from the engineer. That is, to their mutual advantage, and our advantage, Sullivan leaned on Adler as an architect-engineer as well as a businessman and a man with a normal family; and their break-up was a disaster for Louis.

I wonder whether these partnerships in architecture—the businessman, and perhaps engineer, and the more aesthetic and brilliant designer—are not, for better or worse, endemic in our American civilization, given its commercialism, its genteel tradition, its ambiguous attitude toward the arts, and its psychosexual dilemmas. The "practical" man cannot do anything worthy; the "artistic" man cannot cope with the clients or the technology, but he is prestigious and socially charming. (At present in architecture, of course, this dilemma has been solved in the giant offices by turning out canned products of corporate staffs, promoted by organized public relations.)

The bother with the immense early success of an artist is that it is grounded on a false relation and establishes a false expectation; it is a combination of judicious appraisal and superficial fad. An excellent work always fulfills a profound social need, but it may also satisfy what the public wants and thinks it needs. In America, of course, the

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false relation is peculiarly virulent because of the promotion and selling. The immense first success of Sullivan, the Auditorium, was such a promotion scheme through and through, under the impresario "Commodore" Peck; the President and the Governor attended the opening and Adelina Patti sang; probably it was incidental that the building was a masterpiece, so long as it was sumptuous. The Golden Doorway of the Transportation Building, similarly, was allowed to come into existence because of the ballyhoo atmosphere of the Fair. And from the beginning, the height and the boldness of the American skyscrapers were esteemed by their clients solely in terms of competing and packaging.

Such success is a very labile support for an artist. The fad blows elsewhere, the promoter turns to another gimmick, the captains of commerce and industry compete in other ways that have nothing to do with the advancement of the art of architecture. If the artist is an opportunist, he follows the fad and tries to repeat the miracle; if he is serious, like Sullivan, he becomes disappointed and bitterly gripes that the revolution has been betrayed. (Louis did this for thirty years—and indeed, there never had been a revolution.) Further, in a country of uninformed taste like America, the collapse of support is still more drastic, for people don't know a good thing when they have it. In Europe Louis Sullivan's reputation, once established, persisted, and European visitors were astonished at his neglect here. What baffles me, however, is that perceptive American critics esteemed him so highly and nevertheless nothing came of it: this complacency of our people in throwing away excellence is to me simply baffling.

NATURALLY the Irish immigrant's son fell to the temptations of his immense success in true American fashion, style of 1890. His garden in the South employed nearly two dozen servants; he became a member of the exclusive Chicago Club (we do not read that the Jew Adler was elected to this club); he lived high and was a connoisseur. A certain part of this façade of affluence was no doubt proper to Sullivan's emotionally starved nature (a man has got to have something): the dandyism fitted his narcissism, the rose garden his need for loneliness and his love of flowers; and he was a connoisseur. The trap was that he overcapitalized himself. At first his front paid off in valuable clients and connections (conceivably, it put the germ in his mind that he could do without his business wheel-horse, but this is speculation). Then suddenly, of course, the entire structure of American capitalism plunged into a long depression, and its upstart enterprises, including Louis Sullivan, went down first. I suppose that the more aristocratic Henry Richardson, for instance, would not, had he lived, have been so subject to either boom or bust.

Connely's narrative of Louis's sexual life is calamitously inept. Let me now quote a passage:

> So essentially, with regard to women, were these brothers fond of their mother above all, spirit of her spirit, talent of her talent, that now, as late as their middle thirties, they evidently took no serious interest in anyone else of womankind. Men among men, they were thus far unmarriageable.

(I hasten to assure the reader that the style of this Irish sentence, let stand by a malicious editor, is not frequent in Connely's book.) In another passage he says, "The family entire had remained united in affection, an affection which the bachelorhood of the sons had kept remarkably undivided" —Papa was, at this time, eight years dead.

The facts speak for themselves. Immediately on Mama's death, Albert married, age forty-two. Fighting hard, his new wife made him choose between her and Louis (as well as his other male friends); the marriage was not pleasant but proved stable. Louis, a lonely drinker, waited a couple of years and then, at a similar age, married; but this childless marriage could not withstand its drunken scenes and deepening poverty, and his wife left him. Louis got some happiness from various "little milliners."

So the formidable Mama. What about Papa? At his father's death, in 1884, Louis began, but did not finish, a kind of prose poem called "The Master," drawn from his father the dancing-master and from his ideal of himself as master of disciples. Fifteen years later, on his wedding day in 1899, he suddenly took this unfinished document from the closet and completed it! I submit

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this as an astonishing bit of empirical evidence for the Freudian theory.

The biographer cites remarks to show that Papa was a martinet, but that this gave good work habits to the two talented boys. Perhaps so. What he fails to call attention to is the father's way of carelessly leaving at least Louis behind in his migrations, so that the boy had not only too much father but often no father at all.

About the Sullivans' religion and mores we are left quite blank.

I HAVE tried to show some ways in which a period of American society that has many features similar to our own offered a poor support for its original men, who have, at best, risky careers. The institutions, the mores, the characters interact to crack-up and waste.

I have mentioned the parochialism of the American, isolated not so much from classical tradition as from the international advance-guard tradition; the irregular channels that open opportunity but that also put an inordinate emphasis on luck; gentility, and the separation of artist and craftsman; the ambiguous estimation of the creative artist as impractical and special, making him both powerless and arrogant; the abuse of excellence by the public's need for novel sensation, the promoter's need for gimmicks, and the businessman's need to compete; the deceptiveness of immense success, with its temptations to high life and overcapitalizing oneself; the low level of popular taste and knowledge; the economy of boom and bust; Puritanism and momism. In these circumstances, very many "make good," while some good men are not able to get going at all; very few can stay good and some crack up miserably; and almost no one is put to full use. (For instance, even Wright, who had the character to survive and grow continually and be the typical architect great in old age, was never made use of for the community design that was his chief ambition, perhaps his chief talent, and certainly our chief need.)

Against this background, finally, let us notice Louis Sullivan's theory of functionalism. This is one of the key concepts of modern times and of the American contribution, along with pragmatism, progressive education, the American kind of democracy. Sullivan can be mentioned honorably with James, Dewey, Veblen, Beard, Mead; he himself talked a lot about Whitman.

Yet our contemporary theory of functionalism does not come from Louis Sullivan. It comes mainly from Europe, e.g. from the International Style (of Le Corbusier and others) where it follows from the analysis of machine technology, of the facts of urbanism and industrial economics, constructivist aesthetics and the ideas of abstract painting; or from the Bauhaus, where it follows from technology, scientism, studies in biological minimal standards, and the politically radical critique of social relations. And somewhat from Wright's craftsmanlike and progressive-educational feeling for materials and shapes. Sullivan's "organic" natural growth seems desperately sentimental. His notion of appropriateness —"A bank must look like a Bank, a church like a Church"—is lacking in social criticism of the programs that society offers, and it plays right into the hands of packagers. One is often hard put to see how the eclecticism he rejects is different in principle from his own combinations of Richardson-Romanesque structure and pre-Raphaelite applied decoration. And his Americanism could not be more politically blind to the real surroundings that had unmanned him and were destroying him.

Even so! the functionalist theory of Louis Sullivan is the keystone of the arch, because only he attends to the whole man, as the end and the agent. He muffs the politics and science, but not the art of architecture, which must be, in the end, informed feeling and an act of invention. He is erotic; like his master Taine, he has a feeling for concrete place and history; he is musical; and he is a psychologist. "The *Kindergarten Chats,*" said Sullivan,

> will strike deeper than you are inclined to imagine. As a psychological study they will be beyond anything I have hitherto attempted. The key to them [is] the development of the character and artistic nature of the young man *from within.* It will be the first serious attempt ever made to test architecture by human nature and democracy.

He wrote that in 1901, when he was well on his way down as a practicing builder. Like a true poet, he devoted himself to the considered fantasy of what is not, but ought to be.

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CONTROVERSY

THE COLD WAR

Leon Lipson—a member of the Yale Law School faculty and a consultant to the Rand Corporation—and Nehemiah Jordan—who has worked for various "think factories"—here comment on "The American Crisis," an article by David Riesman and Michael Maccoby, which appeared in our June issue. An answer by Professors Riesman and Maccoby follows.

Professor Lipson writes:

David Riesman and Michael Maccoby have addressed themselves to a large canvas, and they have used a broad brush; but their paint is much too thin. Let me point out some examples of what seems to be their misconception of the nature and subject matter of strategic thought and of the cold war. In making these comments, I shall pass over the "whither America?" parts of the article; the knack of building an "inductive" generalization upon a single item of evidence, presenting the generalization and exhibiting the item as if only illustrative; and such odd indicators of the authors' attitudes as the urban fear of the yokel, implied in their comment about "backwoods reactionaries," and the muted Anglophilia.

The authors' argument on the cold war seems to rest chiefly on three dubious assumptions:

(a) That the main issue of United States national security is the debate between a war party and a peace party, in which the war party is concerned with death and destruction and the peace party is concerned with life, liberty, and the pacific settlement of outstanding issues.

(b) That armament is the great problem to which disarmament is the great solution.

(c) That the relevant characteristics of the Soviet Union and the United States are so nearly symmetrical as to justify the use of mirror imagery.

A. The authors have many hard words for strategic analysts, whom they term "cold warriors" and whom incidentally they lump together without more than perfunctory recognition of the diversity of attitude and doctrine by which they are divided. Besides using such ugly epithets as "expert" and "polished rationality," the article hints or suggests by unmistakable though oblique identification that some of the American "cold warriors" are ex-Communists; that they or many of them are probably obsessed with fears about their masculinity; that their policies are "murderous" or "imperialistic"; that they are on the wrong side of a division between the "cynics" and the "idealists"; and that they enjoy thinking about war for war's sake. The attribution of psycho-pathological motives at long distance is a powerful forensic weapon, and the authors have resorted so freely to it that one suspects them of having no great faith in their other weapons. I shall not venture upon a similar tele-psychoanalysis.

The authors write as if they supposed that the task of strategic planning was to devise the biggest possible bang for the highest possible number of casualties or the largest possible volume of destruction. I do not believe that they have shown adequate supporting evidence. Strategists have sought to devise a policy that would stand the best chance both of deterring the outbreak of unacceptable violence and of winning with minimum loss in the event that deterrence failed. In pursuit of that policy they have of course spent much thought on "hardware," but most strategists are no longer—and the good ones never were—preoccupied with hardware to the neglect of political, psychological, and especially moral considerations. The authors have not fortified their argu-

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ment against strategists by the assertion, made as if it were a disputed contention, that peace is to be preferred to war. On what basis do they imply that strategic planners are less interested in the attainment of a peaceful world than other citizens are? If strategic planners are as able as the authors concede in their first sentence, they do not really have much cause to fear technological unemployment if peace were to break out, or much cause to distort their appraisals of the chances for a decent peace; and the authors' implications to the contrary only cheapen the article.

B. The authors discuss disarmament as though it were an issue, separable from national security and diplomacy, which could be settled simply by a change in our attitudes. To handle "the problem of coping with despotic governments," they commend "the remarkable invention of Gandhian non-violent resistance." Whatever success might be attributed to Gandhiism was registered between the two world wars and after 1945 in coping with the British government—not a particularly despotic one. If *recollection serves, Gandhi advised* Czechoslovakia and the Jews that they should cope with Hitler by just resisting passively, and that if millions died in this way they would still preserve their honor, losing only their physical bodies. The suggestion may have merit by extra-terrestrial criteria, but it is hard to see how it can be called the "more humane" side of our current debates on deterrence.

To say that disarmament will bring about peace is redundant if it means that at the instant after complete disarmament you have no more arms; it is false if it means that peace is a label for a definite attainable goal, like the tape stretched across the finish line of a cross-country race. The outcome of the arms race, or of some future disarming race, will be not at a point in time but along a course of time. War and peace, as extremes along a continuum of intensity of violence, are the limits of a process of conflict and cooperation, the momentum of which will not depend mainly on the number and types of arms in existence at a given moment.

It is true that the recent large increase in the destructiveness of weapons has posed a new problem in strategy for their users as well as for their targets; among other things, it has threatened to preclude a "reasonable" proportionality between differing strengths and differing outcomes, and thus to unsettle one of the main factors making for international stability. It does not follow from this, however, that we should (or should not) lay our weapons aside. Those who insisted on demanding unconditional surrender in 1943–44 tended to skip over the question, "What are we fighting *for*?" Those who now press for disarmament should consider in what manner, and for what objectives, we ought to disarm. Neither fighting nor disarming provides its own rationale. The question is not whether the nation should decide for war or for peace; to frame it in that way does not improve the chances of peace and benefits no one—except, perhaps, the nation's adversaries if they do not make the same mistake.

C. The authors' strictures on American strategic planning would look more cogent if it could be conceded that there is no essential difference between Soviet and U. S. *aims and responsibility in the cold war; if it* could be conceded, that is, that the positions are after all pretty nearly symmetrical. The authors seem at times to be urging this concession. They lay stress again and again on the extent to which, in their view, the Russians emulate us, especially in our disagreeable features. Rebels like Pasternak, they say, run the same kind of risk as American students with radical ideas; the United States, they say, is like the elder brother fearful of the rivalry of his younger brother; American "cold warriors" are matched with Stalinists in the Kremlin; the peacemakers in Washington are matched with the peacemakers in the Kremlin; disarmament is hampered by "our fears on the one hand and Russia's distrust of inspectors on the other."

THE IDEA of the mirror image is an attractive one. It offers a ready-made point of view from a ready-made platform, contributing toward philosophical detachment, conducing to critical introspection, and providing an irreproachable outlet for other-directedness. It seems somehow morally uplifting to climb upon the umpire's stand to announce to both sides, "Your rivalry is

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only in the mind. The other fellow is much like you. Change the mental attitude that makes you think he is out to get you, and the problem will disappear." One side may listen and stop. The other may applaud and go on fighting.

Even if the Soviet Union resembled the United States in relevant respects, as closely as the article suggests, the resemblance might not be good grounds for complacency; but that issue need not be reached. The two houses are not the same, however pleasant it might seem to be to call down a plague on both of them. The discernment of the differences may have been obscured by the pseudo-sophistication of some of the observers. Soviet propagandists have helped to increase the difficulty by debasing the linguistic currency, appropriating for their own peculiar uses many of the most attractive and "positive" abstractions in political discourse. Yet, after all possible allowances are made for the slipperiness of language and for the bias of the observers' position, there remains a substantial disparity between the Soviet Union and the United States in such qualities as secrecy and openness, coercion and persuasion, repression and freedom. (If the bogeyman "of a Soviet takeover" is "not entirely fanciful," then it is not entirely a bogeyman.) If our side is the better side in many ways that matter, why should we be ashamed to say so and act on that belief? That the contrary may be asserted, and even believed, by others is a politically important datum, but it does not necessarily of itself change the reality.

The cold war will not cease to exist if we only wish it away. Or, rather, if we only wish it away, it will be won by the Soviet Union. The authors do not seem to recognize the distinction between peaceful coexistence and "peaceful coexistence." "Peaceful coexistence" is a Soviet synonym for the cold war. Peaceful coexistence, without the quotation marks, is something else; and Professors Riesman and Maccoby, while they certainly have shown themselves free from the sin of polished rationality, have not shown that strategic analysts in the United States hope less nobly or earnestly for peaceful coexistence than they.

* * *

Mr. Jordan writes:

David Riesman and Michael Maccoby focus attention on problems which the American public should never have neglected. It is, therefore, very unfortunate that the authors open their article with a gratuitous slur upon a group of hardworking professionals who are employed in the so-called think factories set up by the military: the Rand Corporation, Johns Hopkins' Operations Research Office, etc. By and large, these professionals, "a very large number of the ablest minds in the country," are not prostituting themselves by trying to "find holes in any possibility of a test ban or other rapprochement with the Russians" or by being "in the business of manufacturing objections, much as any clique in any country can manufacture incidents."

The attack on the professionals working for the military is unwarranted for two reasons: a) it is patently false as a generalization, and b) it is never mentioned either explicitly or implicitly in the main body of the paper and hence is unnecessary for the development of the authors' argument. Therefore, it is reasonable to class the authors as either demagogues or fuzzy-minded thinkers. Either of these classifications greatly diminishes their right to be taken seriously.

It is necessary to discuss another issue which the authors again seem to handle in a fuzzy manner. It concerns the role of the expert in a democratic society. In a democratic society, the expert is called in to implement policy and not to set it. The American people adopted a defense policy which it thought would yield peace. The professionals in the think factories facilitated the implementation of the policy. Had they argued and/or refused to help, we, as a people, would have been in a much weaker position than we are today.

Many professionals are quite critical of this policy and have made their viewpoint known both publicly and within channels. Many would probably agree with the main theses proposed by the authors. But does that mean that they should stop trying to solve the problems that rise from our present policy—the only one which we now have?

Paradoxically, in another way our exist-

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ing think factories are a symptom of the American crisis. Within them an atmosphere of creativity has been fostered which enables the professional to function at a level of efficiency rarely found in our more formal academic settings. (This refers to the social sciences; I am not qualified to speak about the humanities or the physical sciences.) Within them we are developing techniques to mobilize and utilize our national brainpower that augurs great promise for the future.

But why is it that only the military have think factories? Why shouldn't the State Department have one? What about the Department of Commerce? Our think factories are preparing us for every contingency except for the one we want most—peace. They are not expensive as such things go, yet there is no money. And this is a crisis in government, in public opinion.

The think factories point to another crisis which is much nearer home to Drs. Riesman and Maccoby. The professionals in the think factories have, by and large, rejected the academic world: very few of them return to the university and/or to research centers under academic control and guidance. This academic crisis was also known in antiquity and was probably best described by Dean Swift. Given a man with brains he has been trained to use, expose him to an environment where he is encouraged and facilitated to use them without being hampered at every step by shibboleths and proscriptions in the name of "science," then confront him with real problems that entail social responsibility and relieve him of those two words "basic research" (which serve as a cover for all kinds of inanities of commission and omission), it is not surprising to find that he is unwilling to return to Laputa, be it of a late 17th-century or a mid-20th-century version.

* * *

Professors Riesman and Maccoby reply:

Our discussion of Rand, Operations Research Office, and like agencies, was primarily directed at the narrowing of public debate that sets in when many of the ablest men in the country are pre-empted by the rival Services and the AEC, and when the ticket of admission to the debate increasingly requires expert knowledge. We do not think these agencies are merchants of death; neither do we think they are merchants of peace. (We vividly recall the furor in the government and the press when Dr. Paul Kecskemeti, a distinguished scholar capable of philosophical detachment, published under Rand auspices a book about surrender.) To the extent that our article gave the impression that we feel morally superior to scientists and scholars who work for Rand or like agencies, we have regrets. Mr. Jordan and Professor Lipson are right to point out that dedicated men, not wedded to the strategy of deterrence, work for Rand; and these researchers have differentiated positions which should not be lumped together; and, we would add, that experts have often combated from within mindless attitudes ventured by the rival Services. Moreover, we are as opposed as Mr. Jordan and Professor Lipson are to the academic snobbery that takes pride in the irrelevance of "pure" research (done in a dialectic relation with a discipline) as against "applied" work (done in a dialectic relation with a client).

We are aware, with Professor Lipson, that the cold war cannot be wished away and that disarmament is not a panacea, that it is one strand in a complex web of diplomacy. We think opportunities for diplomatic negotiation have been missed, notably in 1953 after Stalin's death and prior to the East German riots. In a forthcoming article in *Daedalus*, "Decision-making in the United States Government," Saville Davis of the *Christian Science Monitor* soberly describes a later stage when the disarmament negotiations conducted by Stassen were sabotaged during the Foster Dulles era, while keeping up the pretense of genuine concern and attempting to put on the Soviet Union all, not merely some, of the onus for breakdown. One reason for this pretense lay in the fact that President Eisenhower is genuinely pacific (and not only, as he so often presents himself, merely budget-minded); in effect, a struggle between a peace party and a "position of strength" party has been going on within our own government for some time.

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Professor Lipson, however (despite his wise rejection of "unconditional surrender" which helped destroy the German anti-Nazis), appears to regard the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc as lacking any such divisions and as exploiting "peaceful coexistence" as a slogan to trap the unwary. No doubt, many Communist leaders in Peking and Pankow, Prague and the Kremlin, are as contemptuous of this slogan as Professor Lipson himself, and view the West with a like feeling of moral superiority coupled with suspicion. But there have been and still are other Communist leaders whose position our own policy has tended, in fits and starts, to undermine, who do want "peaceful coexistence." They are aware that their people long for peace, having suffered the depredations both of their own Stalinists and of the Nazis; and they realize that, despite decades of virulent official propaganda, America is still admired, and Americans popular, with the people. "Peaceful coexistence," which appeals to this sentiment in the masses, becomes more than a slogan for disarming a gullible enemy or evoking neutralism; it becomes a modest limitation on the freedom of maneuver of the dictatorial regime itself. We do not believe, as Professor Lipson seems to, that the internal struggle over this concept within the Communist countries is *entirely* staged for the greater deception of the non-Communist world. After an earlier naivety which regarded the USSR as a "peace-loving democracy" kept from even greater love of peace only by the Western *cordon sanitaire,* much American expert as well as lay opinion has jumped to a *1984*-style view of an impervious monolith; and the Soviets have succeeded the British as the fiendishly ingenious manipulators for whom American innocence is no match.

THE "mirror image" Professor Lipson mentions so disparagingly is on the contrary helpful in combating such simplifications and in throwing light on the dimly understood ways in which, in the relations of big powers to each other, the peace party and the jingo party within each (often irrespective of numerical weight) can strengthen or impede one another. Furthermore, we think it too easy an assumption to regard the Soviet Union as implacably expansionist, kept from overrunning or obliterating the NATO countries only by our ability for massive destruction of the Russian populace. Some Soviet leaders have been quite cautious, not eager to incorporate indigestible democrats and socialists; some, indeed, have been isolationists. Professor Lipson may be right and we may be wrong about the balance of Soviet strategy at any given moment—but American policy has not had a free hand to explore possibilities of influencing that strategy for the better, but rather has fallen back largely on an arms race in which nightmare possibilities, imagined by the experts and the leaders of either side, tend to become probabilities.

In this situation, stress upon the actual moral superiority of American society over Soviet society is not merely a straightforward and unashamed parading of the truth, as Professor Lipson argues, but has other meanings as well; our article discussed the ironic situation of those who, like ourselves, while agreeing with Professor Lipson as to America's greater openness and decency, find these very qualities threatened when they become counters in the cold war. Nor is it easy to decide under what circumstances American claims to superiority assist in the liberalization of Soviet society, or add to severe feelings of inferiority and reactive (as well as genuine) feelings of superiority on their side. And there is the danger that American moral complacency, even if justified in the eyes of a non-existent planetary umpire, can lead to acceptance of measures of defense based on the power of mass extermination—measures whose cumulative consequences may destroy the future's right to be freer, more alive, and more humane than either side presently is.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Predicting Delinquency

To the Editor of Commentary:

Kenneth Keniston's efforts to unravel the "entangling" of juvenile delinquency [June] was, it seemed to me, only partly successful. He does make a case that the Gluecks and the Youth Board have bungled in their attempts at prediction, but he goes on to imply that prediction is not worth the community's expenditures of time, money, and effort. This is questionable.

The shortcoming of the kind of prediction tried by the Gluecks, he implies, is that it is not causal analysis, or, even if it is, it does not probe for the *basic* causes . . . and is incapable of revealing to us the "cultural, social, historical, or even ideological factors that might help produce delinquency." . . . But until the time comes when we have a better knowledge of the contextual causal factors of delinquency, shall we sit around and do nothing about it? As Keniston admits, "the complex social and ideological roots of juvenile delinquency do not, of course, rule out the treatment of individual delinquents." If, however, such treatment is worthwhile—if not merely permissible—the question then arises whether we should wait until the kids get into trouble or we should try to spot them before they get there. . . .

A community might well desire to try to cope with the symptoms even as it searches for the basic causes of this social illness. . . . Unless it is going to spend some money on the means for the long-range collection of accurate, objective, and meaningful statistics, epidemiological analysis will not be possible. And without such analysis the unraveling (in the sense of identifying the broad contextual causal factors) of juvenile delinquency will not be possible either.

Murray Gendell

New York, N. Y.

Mr. Keniston *writes*:

Mr. Gendell and I do not disagree as much as he thinks. How could I possibly oppose "the long-range collection of accurate, objective, and meaningful statistics"? Nor did I argue that we should "sit around and do nothing" about juvenile delinquency until we understand it perfectly. In fact, I mentioned two approaches which seem to help, individual treatment and work with gangs, and I implied that providing a decent position and a sense of community for low-status immigrant groups might also lessen delinquency.

Our main misunderstanding comes with Mr. Gendell's conviction that I believe all efforts to predict delinquency are misguided. I did not say this. I did argue that the Youth Board Prediction study has failed, and that the ballyhoo about it was unfortunate. I then tried to show why "such efforts"—studies which systematically ignore social, ethnic, community, cultural, and ideological factors in delinquency—are very likely to fail and, as in this case, actively to mislead. In a happier world than New York City, pathogenic social conditions may disappear, in which case we may be better able to predict delinquency at an early age solely on the basis of family integration. But not now.

Rockwell and Freedom

To the Editor of Commentary:

I should like to endorse most heartily the views expressed by Milton Himmelfarb in "Some Notes on Jewish Affairs" [August] where he discusses the right of George Lincoln Rockwell to disseminate his Nazi poison under the constitutional protection of freedom of speech and the defense of Rockwell by civil libertarians, among them Jews. . . . By exercising the right of freedom of speech to the extent advocated by the civil libertarians, a bigot could conceivably destroy, with impunity and immunity, the very civil liberties he exploits and abuses.

It is amazing, too, to observe how civil libertarians are far more concerned with a bigot's right to free expression than with the

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consequences for the intended victims, or with the latter's rights to unmolested life or liberty. The suspicion also arises that Jewish liberals in particular are so liberal only where Jews are the target. . . .

DAVID RUDAVSKY

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is difficult to decide whether Milton Himmelfarb is angrier at George Rockwell, the self-styled Nazi, or at the American Jews who have defended his constitutional right to preach anti-Semitism. . . .

The author tortures both the law and logic when he attempts to find a legal and historical justification for suppressing anti-Semitic speech. Referring to Mr. Justice Holmes' famous illustration of the man who cries "fire" in a theater, he asks, "Yet would not a fire marshal be justified in applying for an injunction to bar from the theaters a man with a long record of crying fire, or actually setting fires?" The answer, very simply, is "No." In law a crime may justify a conviction, but a "long record" creates no presumption of future wrongdoing. . . . Mr. Himmelfarb also seems to be saying that because Nazism had such ghastly results in Europe, we should have learned from the past to throw all those who preach some form of Nazism into prison. A closer reading of history might lead us to believe, on the contrary, that because Nazism rose to power by using mob violence to oppress minorities, we ought never to emulate them. . . .

The ultimate repository of the rights of American Jews, and of all American minorities, is the Constitution of the United States, supported by an enlightened public opinion. We are able to enlighten public opinion only because we are free to speak; dare we then weaken the Constitution even by the suppression of one anti-Semite? We cannot evade this question by legal sophistry and appeals to history. . . .

RICHARD E. RUBENSTEIN

Washington, D. C.

Ethics and Eichmann

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If we follow Professor Oscar Handlin's thesis as propounded in the August issue of COMMENTARY to its "logical" conclusion, then we would have to assume that the same argument would permit Adolf Hitler to live in peace if he were alive today and residing in a country such as Argentina.

My main purpose in writing, however, is not to be critical of Professor Handlin, for it is rather difficult for me to equate ethics with the heinous crimes committed by Eichmann and his ilk. I am writing primarily to commend Norman Podhoretz and Milton Himmelfarb for their courage and clarity in their articles in the August issue. . . .

IRVING BERNSTEIN

Beverly Hills, Calif.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Professor Handlin was distressed by Dr. Jacob Robinson's article [July] on Eichmann, I am equally distressed by the Professor and the scores of Jewish beatniks who have made a pastime of compiling contemptuous criticism of Israeli management of the Eichmann affair. . . .

I warmly applaud Milton Himmelfarb for his comments on this subject. He indeed belongs "In the Community." I should, in addition, like to compliment the Editor for his forthright opinion on this subject.

(DR.) NORMAN S. JAFFE

Miami, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When the Israeli government consented to the abduction of Adolph Eichmann from Argentina, they did so with full knowledge of the risks involved in committing an unfriendly act against a friendly government. . . . To try to give an illegal act the cloak of legality as Jacob Robinson did is an unfortunate defense. . . .

The Israeli government now has Eichmann, which is the most important fact. This should be applauded by anyone who believes the guilty should be punished, but let us not be so naive as to maintain they got him legally or ethically.

ROBERT S. LEAF

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Norman Podhoretz in his remarks in "The Issue" merely adds confusion to the already complex Eichmann case. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz measures Eichmann's life against those of six million Jews—and he

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recoils from what he sees. Surely, the death of six million Jews and the behavior of the Nazis were unprecedented, calling for something unique; but Eichmann is simply a man whose death presumably honors the memory of his victims. This is not unique; it is merely another killing in a time when mass killing is restrained only by the poor "image" it creates. . . .

PAUL D. VELDE

Milwaukee, Wisc.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although brief, Oscar Handlin's comment in reply to Jacob Robinson's article is the best statement on the Eichmann affair that I have yet read. . . .

MORTON MEZVINSKY
Dept. of History

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Polemical Philosophy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There may be those who enjoy the denigrating kind of review offered by Marshall Cohen of Ernest Gellner's *Words and Things* in the August issue. Yet a reviewer who wishes to reject a book should expose what he takes to be the weaknesses of its argument rather than resort to wise and snippy remarks, the meanings of which are by no means always clear. Gellner wrote his book for a serious purpose, not, as Cohen suggests in his opening paragraph, in the hope of creating a sensation. And while the book is clearly polemical, Cohen's characterization of it as "offensively ill-mannered and brazenly unfair" is surely open to dispute. Indeed, anyone who is familiar with the polemical style of the philosophers of the London School of Economics . . . must be surprised at its mildness of manner.

It is true that the book is rather one-sided and fails to credit linguistic philosophers with overly much. . . . But Gellner could reply that his main purpose was to uncover and examine the presuppositions of linguistic philosophy even if linguistic philosophers themselves have never troubled to make these explicit. If Cohen thinks that Gellner is mistaken, let him show that this is the case. And if he thinks him in error about the nature of the argument from the paradigm case and its central importance to the method of linguistic philosophy, let him show that too.

It is of a piece with the denigrating purpose of the review that Cohen can suggest that Gellner is not prepared for the task he undertook by remarking that J. L. Austin's "remarkable paper, 'Other Minds,' is dismissed in one sentence in a footnote" —remarkable paper, indeed—without mentioning that only Wittgenstein has more citations than Austin in Gellner's index. Cohen may be correct in observing that "the book will be treated by Oxford philosophers as vulgarly sensational and unworthy of refutation." More interesting, however, will be the future of the movement after its younger and less committed students begin to take seriously the invitation implicit in Gellner's book to examine its foundations.

LEON J. GOLDSTEIN

Brooklyn, N. Y.

MR. COHEN *writes:*

Mr. Goldstein has an odd taste. He dislikes what he calls "denigrating" book reviews, but appears to delight in "denigrating" books. He has a peculiar notion of an invitation as well: it can be written in a polemical style and appear to those at whom it is directed—to Professor Ryle for one—as abusive. The fact, if it is a fact, that the abuse is mild in comparison with the sort of thing philosophers at the London School of Economics usually dish out is, I am afraid, cold comfort.

Mr. Goldstein deplores my neglect of Gellner's arguments. He does not notice (not to say refute) my argument against Gellner's contention that "conceptual conservatism" implies "political conservatism," and quite begs the question whether Gellner *has* any arguments concerning the school's use of the PCA. I did not challenge Gellner's refutation of Flew's argument, but suggested that it could hardly substitute for an analysis displaying the presence and position of this argument in the major writings of the school. Since Gellner did not give such an analysis, Mr. Goldstein's request is in effect a request that I write the book I was asked to review.

It is because I wish that book had been written (I do not consider myself a member of the school on Gellner's or on my

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own criteria), and because I thought Gellner might have written it, that I wrote, "There is enough truth in what he might have said for him to have made the effort to say it." No doubt Mr. Goldstein will consider it a trivial linguistic point if I remark that to say Gellner had not made "the effort" was not to say—as I did not say—that Gellner was "not prepared for the task."

What bearing my observation that Gellner dismisses Austin's "Other Minds" (which Mr. Goldstein designates in a wise and snippy remark) has on my estimation of Gellner's ability (as opposed to his sobriety), I utterly fail to understand. And the fact that Austin's name is cited almost as frequently as Wittgenstein's in the index is perhaps the most desperate argument that could have been made to convince us that either of their (significantly different) philosophies is given a serious consideration. What it is more likely to confirm is the view that Gellner's book is largely an exercise in name-calling, which may, at the London School of Economics, for all I know, be a way of issuing invitations.

Slum Psychology and Housing

To the Editor of Commentary:

Two ideas stand out in Michael Harrington's discussion on slums ["Slums, Old and New," August]:

1. "Public housing by itself fails to solve the problems of slum psychology"; and
2. "A certain level of aspiration and culture is necessary before one can take advantage of modern opportunities."

However, Mr. Harrington fails to give proper consideration to these in formulating his concluding remarks. . . . Jewish history is relevant here. When Moses took the Jews out of Egypt he took them first into the desert. There he gave them a Torah, which in our terms we may call "a culture and aspiration." This he did before supplying them with a Homeland or housing. . . . But even if we ignore Moses, ordinary logic will tell us that if the cause of slum psychology is the absence of culture and aspiration, the building of more and bigger housing projects, no matter how dispersed, will not solve the problem. The equivalent of the slum psychology among the well-to-do is the beatnik phenomenon. Both conditions seem to require the same treatment, a return to the moral values and recognition by society for the same.

Menahem Steinberg

Chicago, Illinois

Books, Identities, Syntax

To the Editor of Commentary:

Let me protest Elmer Borklund's slick disdain, in his review of *The Noble Savage* [August], for Harold Rosenberg's essay, "Notes From the Ground Up," in which, Rosenberg, to my understanding, brings attention to the way in which middle-brow critics and writers have debilitated the idea of "identity" into a sort of fetish. . . .

For a demonstration of the insight behind Rosenberg's essay, you can't do better than consider Mr. Borklund's own review. His critiques of Ralph Ellison and Wright Morris wouldn't let you suspect that there was some difference of quality between the men: it's all a question of "identity"; i.e., totting up errors in composition, bad usage, etc., and never of forwarding ideas of values behind the writing. Every writer, good, mediocre, and hack, has his identity, which means everybody gets a prize, or an "evaluation." Phoney analogies also have their place in the commerce of "identity"; e.g., "neighborhood Harcourt Reilly," "Beckett in the Midwest," or comparing Herbert Gold, never ask me how, with Dylan Thomas. Step up and get your identity, even if it's someone else's!

Donald Phelps

Brooklyn, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

Your reviewer of my collection of stories, *Love and Like,* believes that one of the stories is a "young classic" and that two of them are almost as good, but the book is mostly not to his taste. The decisions of taste and interpretation are his privilege and I shall not dispute them on this occasion.

However, he also manages to misquote me four times in the space of a short review. I believe that a young man hoping to grow up to be a book reviewer should learn the few rules of the game. Taste should certainly be individual, but quotations must follow the text.

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With one exception, his misquotations of me are trivial. The word "greatest" for "great" only makes my sentence slightly ridiculous; the reversal of the nouns in my title, "The Burglars and the Boy," provides a slight, perhaps academic disappointment; the combination of quotation and misparaphrase enables him to get in some polemical moments when he deals with this sentence in my postface: "The unheroic isolation of the bachelor seems to me to be an emblem of the unheroic isolation of various esthetes, hedonists, Platonists—lonely and ambitious and failed and reduced to brutal egotism."

However, in one case, where he belabors me for faulty syntax, he engages in an illegitimate bit of business by supporting the accusation with citation of a sentence from which he has removed a syntactically important preposition, "to." I have examined the books and magazines in which this story has appeared, in the hope that this particular error of syntax occurred in some other printing and could therefore be justified. It occurs only in your reviewer's version as a bit of creative writing on his part.

I do not consider myself beyond criticism and in one case have even learned something from a magazine review. But your reviewer, defending his version of "form" and the "paleface" virtues against my "redskin" violence, has marched into the woods with too much pale skin showing behind.

HERBERT GOLD

New York, New York

MR. BORKLUND *writes*:

I must apologize for carelessly changing "great" into "greatest" and "The Burglars and the Boy" into "The Boy and the Burglars." But in the rest of Mr. Gold's letter (which avoids the basic criticism I have made of his recent stories), he distorts my remarks about *Love and Like*. Since the passage from the postface is quoted accurately, I can only conclude that a "misparaphrase" must mean a paraphrase which Gold dislikes. In other words, he does not approve of the way in which I use the quotation, and this, of course, is his privilege. Finally, when I say that sense and syntax collapse at times, I have in mind (and suspect that Gold realizes this as well as I do) that *part* of the sentence which reads "some pretty, some unpretty, and nevertheless the long Sunday afternoon habit of lovemaking spoke for a true intimacy" (*Best American Short Stories 1959*, Ballantine Books, p. 139, the only text I have handy at the moment). I have reread this passage several times, and it still strikes me as being incoherent: what is the antecedent of "some," and how can one justify the sudden shift in construction in the clumsily tacked-on final clause ("and nevertheless" etc.)? Regardless of the terms one uses, grammatical or stylistic, this, like many other passages of Gold's prose, seems to me awkward and unsatisfactory.

As to Mr. Phelps' comments: I object to Mr. Rosenberg's essay primarily because of its barbarous style. Here, as elsewhere, his prose is ponderous, ugly, and unnecessarily obscure. I happen to agree with one of the points in question (a fairly obvious point, it seems to me): namely, that too many novelists evidently feel their major objective is an accurate description of their characters' social positions.

Why is Mr. Phelps so upset by my use of comparisons? They are meant to be helpful, to suggest parallels, but *not* to the extent of implying "identities," suggesting influences or making judgments. While Mr. Phelps may not approve of my particular analogies, I fail to see how he can seriously attack the principle of discussing the new and unknown in terms of the already known and established. Herbert Gold's stories of his childhood remind me, pleasantly, of Dylan Thomas's stories of his childhood. That's as far as it goes, and when I make a major critical objection to *Love and Like*, I do not rely on comparisons, but try to take the work in its own terms. Had I devoted more space to the individual writers in *The Noble Savage*, I would have used the same approach; but unlike Mr. Phelps, I do not feel that the issue warranted further attention. As for "totting up" errors and awarding prizes, it is idiotic, in my opinion, to imply that this is not a legitimate critical concern.

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Demonic Fiction of a Yiddish "Modernist"*

IRVING HOWE

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER is the only living Yiddish writer whose translated work has caught the imagination of the American literary public. Though his brilliant stories and novels are crowded with grotesque happenings, though they often seem to comprise an alien sub-world of imps, devils, whores, spirits in seizure, charlatans, and false messiahs, the contemporary reader—for whom the determination not to be shocked has become a point of honor—is likely to feel closer to Singer than to any, or most, of the other Yiddish writers. Offhand this may be surprising, for Singer's subjects are decidedly remote: in *Satan in Goray,* the orgiastic consequences of the false messianism of 17th-century East European Jews; in his book of stories *Gimpel the Fool,* a range of demonic, apocalyptic, and perversely sacred moments of *shtetl* life; and now in his new novel *The Magician of Lublin,* a portrait of a Jewish acrobat-magician-Don Juan in late 19th-century Poland who exhausts himself in sensuality and ends his life as a penitent ascetic. Yet one feels that, unlike many of the Yiddish writers who treat more familiar and up-to-date subjects, Singer commands a distinctively "modern" sensibility.

Now this is partly true—in the sense that Singer, though a master of Yiddish prose, has cut himself off from some of the traditional assumptions of Yiddish literature. But it is also not true—in the sense that any effort to assimilate Singer to literary "modernism" without registering how deeply involved he is with Jewish history and faith, is certain to distort the meanings of his work.

Those meanings, one might as well admit, are often enigmatic and hard to come by. It must be a common experience among Singer's readers to find a quick pleasure in the caustic surfaces of his prose, the nervous tokens of his virtuosity—for simply as a literary *performer* he has few peers among living writers—but then to acknowledge themselves baffled when they inquire into the point or purpose of his fictions. That these do have an insistent point and stringent purpose no one can doubt; Singer is too ruthlessly single-minded a writer to content himself with mere slices of representation or displays of the bizarre. His grotesquerie must be taken seriously, perhaps as a recoil from his perception of how ugly—how gratuitously ugly—human life can be. He is a writer completely absorbed by the demands of his vision, a vision gnomic and compulsive but with moments of high exaltation; so that while reading his stories one feels as if one were overhearing bits and snatches of a monologue, the impact of which is both notable and disturbing, but the meaning withheld.

Now these are precisely the qualities that the sophisticated reader, trained to docility before the exactions of "modernism," has come to applaud. Singer's stories work, or prey, upon the nerves. They leave one unsettled and anxious, the way a rationalist might feel if, walking at night in the woods, he suddenly found himself afraid of bats. Unlike most Yiddish fiction, Singer's stories neither round out the cycle of their intentions nor posit a coherent and ordered universe. They can be seen as paradigms of the arbitrariness, the grating injustice, at the heart of life. They offer instances of pointless suffering, dead-end exhaustion, inexplicable grace. And sometimes, as in Singer's masterpiece "Gimpel the Fool," they turn about, refusing to rest with the familiar discomforts of the problematic, and drive to-

* A review of *The Magician of Lublin,* by ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER; translated by ELAINE GOTTLIEB and JOSEPH SINGER (Noonday, 246 pp., $3.50).

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ward a prospect of salvation on the other side of despair. But this prospect does not depend on any belief in the comeliness or lawfulness of the universe: whether or not God is there, surely He is no protector. Things happen, the probable bad and improbable good, both of them subject to the whim of the fortuitous—and the sacred fools, like Gimpel, learn to roll with the punch, finding the value of their life in a total passivity and openness to suffering.

It is hardly a secret that in the Yiddish literary world Singer is regarded with a certain suspicion or at least reserve. His powers of evocation, his resources as a stylist are acknowledged, yet many Yiddish literary people, including serious ones, seem to be uneasy about him. One reason is that "modernism"—which, as these people regard Singer, means a heavy stress upon sexuality, a concern for the irrational, expressionist distortions of character, and an apparent indifference to the more conventional aspects of Jewish life—has never won so strong a hold in Yiddish writing as it has in most Western literatures. For the Yiddish writers, "modernism" has often been a mere adornment of manner upon a subject inescapably traditional, or a means of intensifying a sense of estrangement from collective values to which they nevertheless remain bound.

The truly "modern" writer, however, is not quite trustworthy in his relation to his culture; he is a shifty character by choice and need, unable to settle into that representative solidity which would permit him to serve as a cultural "spoksman." And to the extent that Singer shares in the modernist outlook he will be regarded with distrust by Yiddish readers brought up on such "spokesmen" as Peretz, Abraham Reisen, and H. Leivick. There is, to be sure, no lack of admiration among Yiddish readers for Singer's work: anyone with half an ear must respond to the marvelously taut and subtle rhythms of his prose. Still, it is a qualified admiration. Singer's moral outlook, which seems to move equally toward the sensational and the ascetic, and his assumption that in fiction grotesquerie can be made to serve almost as a mode of knowledge, are hardly traits calculated to put Yiddish readers at their ease.

I must confess that my first response to *The Magician of Lublin* was somewhat like the one I have been attributing here to Yiddish readers. The book is not quite so dazzling as *Satan in Goray,* but it does represent Singer at fairly close to his best, particularly in his gifts for evoking the textures of sensuous life and for driving straight to those moments of tension and inner division which reveal the souls of his characters. But while there is no difficulty in making out what happens in the book, there is a real question as to what it all signifies.

The Magician of Lublin centers on the figure of Yasha Mazur, a Jewish acrobat-magician who travels through the towns of Poland, giving performances and entangling himself with women. Like other figures in Singer's work, Yasha is "half Jew, half Gentile—neither Jew nor Gentile. He had worked out his own religion. There was a Creator, but He revealed Himself to no one, gave no indications of what was permitted or forbidden." The theme is recurrent in Singer: even the acknowledgment of God yields no moral assurance, and with or without Him men lose their way.

At the beginning, Yasha is seen during one of his rare visits home, basking in his prosperity and enjoying a good and faithful wife. But he is a restless creature, always driven to test his powers of performance and persuasion, to try out his gifts in still another place, with still another woman. These gifts constitute his curse, and his pleasure in observing his impact upon other people, his undoing.

Yasha moves on, leaving home, visiting his Gentile assistant, who is also a worshipful mistress, having a lively time with a Jewish whore, skirting the life of a gang of Jewish thieves, savoring an encounter with some Jewish white slavers, and finally ending in Warsaw with the biggest risk of his life: a scheme to run off, as he pretends to be unmarried, with a middle-class Gentile widow. This woman represents for him—the symbolism is clear but not insistent—the attractions of the outer cultivated world he had never been able to reach or conquer. Yasha undertakes a robbery to get money for his elopement, fails because of the residual power of his Jewish conscience, and then rapidly falls into flight, pain, collapse. "He had looked on the face of death and lechery and had seen that they were the same. . . .

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He had seen the hand of God. He had reached the end of the road." In an epilogue Yasha is seen at home again, now living as an ascetic who has locked himself in a hut behind his house, suffering cold, hunger, and sexual fantasies, worshipped by the credulous as a new miracle-worker, but still struggling to find his way to God.

FROM page to page the story, like anything Singer writes, is remarkably vivid. Everything springs to life, everything trembles with the breath of actuality. Yet, as one reads, one grows uneasy and begins to consider the kind of criticism to which Singer is sometimes subjected by Yiddish literary people. Why is this juicy description here, that sensual evocation there? Isn't there an indulgence in sensation for its own sake, a surrender to rather than a use of the grotesque? Does not Singer sometimes come close to the self-imitation which is the writer's greatest curse, that self-imitation which consists in falling back upon familiar devices and inflections?

It would be idle to say that these things never happen, yet once we bring to bear the perspectives of "modernism," it becomes a bit easier to grasp and thereby "justify" *The Magician of Lublin*. The very incongruity in the conception of a Jewish Don Juan has its obvious ironic appeal and significance—particularly a Jewish Don Juan with a record of success who fails at precisely the point where conventional Jewish wisdom would predict that he would: his encounter with Christian gentility. The ending of the novel also allows us to see that Singer is working out a complex pattern of suggestion, and not merely indulging in his repertoire of tricks. Yasha becomes a penitent, but so weak in body and faith that he cannot trust himself except under lock and key. Nothing is settled, nothing solved. At the end Yasha retains, embarrassingly, the charismatic powers he had enjoyed as a worldling: life is not so different even after the blessed revelation: the flesh continues to lust, the world remains full of temptations, and the fools who populate it still yearn for easy assuagements.

Between the epilogue and the bulk of the book there is, then, an ironic balance: each cancels out the implications of the other, so that finally, as at the beginning, what Singer offers are questions beyond answer. His particular power rests on this ability to hold such contrary elements as the miraculous and the skeptical, the moral and the exotic in a delicate tension. At times, his style seems almost *as if* it were the style of a man possessed, so thoroughly does he give himself to the subject; yet Singer also maintains a rigorous distance, one is always aware of the *conditional* nature of his involvement.

HAVING gone this far, we must now turn again. If Singer's work can be understood only on the assumption that in some crucial respects he is a "modernist" writer, one must add that in other ways he is profoundly related to the Jewish tradition. And if the Yiddish reader is inclined to slight the first side of his work, so the American reader is likely to underestimate the strength and persistence of the second.

Singer is related to the Jewish tradition not only in the obvious sense that he enjoys a close knowledge of the Jewish past. More importantly, he is one of the few Yiddish writers whose relation to the Jewish past does not depend on that body of attitudes and values we call Yiddishism. He writes *in* Yiddish, but is often quite apart from the Yiddish tradition. He is, so to say, a writer of the pre-Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment; he would be equally at home with a congregation of medieval Jews and a gathering of modern intellectuals, perhaps more so than at a meeting of the Yiddish PEN Club; he has a strong sense of the mystical and antique, but also a stern awareness of psychoanalytic disenchantment; he has evaded both the religious pieties and the humane rationalism of 19th-century East European Judaism. In his fiction Singer has "skipped over" the ideas of the historical epoch which gave birth to Yiddishism, for the truth is, I suppose, that Yiddish literature, in both its acceptance and denials, its writers of faith and its writers of skepticism, is thoroughly caught up with the Enlightenment. Singer shares very little in the collective aspirations or the *folkshtimmlichkeit* of the Yiddish masters; he does not celebrate *dos klaine menshele* as a paragon of sweetness and goodness; he is impatient with the sensual deprivations involved in the values of *edelkeit*; and above all, he breaks away from a central assumption of both the

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19th century and Yiddish literature, the assumption of *tachlis,* an immanent fate or end in human existence.

What remains? The Yiddish critic Shlomo Bickel has perceptively remarked that Singer's dominating principle is "anti-Prometheanism," a disbelief in the efficacy of defiance, striving, and pride, a doubt as to the sufficiency of knowledge or even wisdom. This seems true, but only if one remembers that in a good many of Singer's fictions, particularly in *The Magician of Lublin,* the central action does constitute a sort of Promethean ordeal or straining. Singer makes it abundantly clear that his characters have no choice: they must live out their hungers, their orgiastic yearnings and apocalyptic expectations. "Anti-Prometheanism" thus comes to rest upon a belief in the unavoidable recurrence of the Promethean urge—an urge which, in Singer's view of things, is reduced from ideal to obsession or, perhaps more accurately, makes it impossible to separate ideal from obsession.

In the end, what concerns Singer most of all is the possibilities for life that remain after the exhaustion of human effort, after failure and despair have come and gone. Singer watches his stricken figures from a certain distance, with enigmatic moral intent and no great outpouring of sympathy, almost as if to say that before their collapse neither judgment nor sympathy matters very much. Yet in all of his books the Promethean effort recurs, obsessional, churning with new energy and delusion. In the knowledge of its recurrence there may also lie hidden a kind of pity, for that too we would expect, and can learn to find, in the writer who created Gimpel.

The Complex Arab

TEMPERAMENT AND CHARACTER OF THE ARABS. By SANIA HAMADY. Twayne. 285 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by HAL LEHRMAN

> The Arabs burst into quarrels and threats. . . . The Arabs talk more than they act; their plans and menaces promise more than can be actualized. Their excitement about public issues is easily aroused, but there is no persistent cooperation and no effective cohesion among them. Their public-mindedness is not developed and their social consciousness is weak. The allegiance toward the state is shaky and identification with leaders is not strong.

This robust but typical passage comes from a critical book on the Arab temperament, written not by any "imperialist" nor even by a prejudiced Western scholar, but by an Arab with impeccable credentials for such a study.

DR. SANIA HAMADY, the author, was born in Lebanon. She was educated first in Arab and French schools, then at the American College for Women and the American University in Beirut. She lived for some years in Syria, taught Arabic, French, and English in Baghdad, and met hundreds of fellow students from six Arab states during eight subsequent years of training in the United States. Sociologist, anthropologist, and psychologist, she earned a master's degree from Michigan State, a Ph.D. from Chicago. Now a U. S. citizen, since 1957 she has been an assistant professor of Human Relations at Miami University.

Achievements such as these for any Arab woman are by themselves already quite singular, even among the relatively enlightened Lebanese. But Dr. Hamady's book adds to them. In some ways, it is almost a pioneer work. Many writers have dealt with some aspects of her subject, but no one—and certainly no other Arab—has probed so wide and boldly. Dr. Hamady inspects Arab habits, instincts, conventions, moralities, emotions, social and political attitudes, loyalties, traditions, superstitions, faiths, philosophies, and mental mechanisms.

Her method, as she herself makes clear, is not "scientific." She relies on history, her own recall, and the reports of other observers, rather than on a mass of measured and technically precise samplings. From her material, Dr. Hamady pulls together the significant Arab characteristics—not the exceptional, individual ones, but those which are "general, typical, salient, common"—into a complex "profile." She presents this as a tentative delineation, pending research with finer instruments.

The Arab, says Dr. Hamady, is a generous host, a solicitous friend, a courteous person. (These are talents which have charmed generations of Western visitors and diplomats, especially British and American.)

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But, the author regretfully indicates, such graces are insincere. Arabs give because they intend and expect to receive at least as much. Hospitality and good manners, she says, are for public display. They build a man's reputation—and this, rather than his true worth, is the solid currency in the bazaar. The cardinal evil is to be put to shame in one's own tent or street or village or tribe. Dr. Hamady reports that ostentation, flattery, dissimulation, even lying or worse are considered quite respectable by the Arab, provided they achieve a desired objective—and he doesn't get caught. She notes, for example, that an Arab male will be puritanical in public but, if left alone with a woman, will promptly make sexual advances.

Frankness is regarded as plain folly, Dr. Hamady goes on, among a people who admire guile and "despise the meek." Arab politeness is a calculated diplomacy of "blandishment and adulation" which, if thwarted, explodes easily into rage. She cites a pertinent proverb: "Kiss the hand that you want to bite, and pray that it will be broken. . . ." Conversely, she adds, the Arab hides his inner weakness by an inflated exterior. He boasts, he exaggerates, he walks and talks with an arrogant air. (Another proverb: "Thousands of ladders do not reach his head. . . .") But deep within him, she continues, the Arab is desperately sensitive, a "dreamer," without system, energy, or capacity to strive.

Dr. Hamady tends to lay the blame for the Arab's public behavior patterns on his history, for his private torpor on his religious and philosophical concepts.

Since pre-Mohammedan times, she points out, the family has been the dominant Arab unit, with the individual utterly subordinate to the group. Even the early Bedouins, widely credited for their fierce "democracy," practiced only tribal democracy; their group approval was given to a man on the basis of his prestige, not his value. There was no incentive to individual initiative; indeed, Dr. Hamady recalls, even group initiative was minimal, except for the negative purposes of aggression or defense against outsiders (non-members of the family or tribe). There were "collective outbursts of enthusiasm," but no "collective action for common benefit," no sense of "disciplined unity."

This basic negativism was re-enforced profoundly by Islam, the author maintains. True, the Prophet did sometimes preach of the need for volition and decision in this life. But down the centuries the mass of the faithful have instinctively hearkened only to those admonitions of the Koran, the *hadith* and the *sunna* which stressed this world's worthlessness and man's impotence before Allah. The Arab's earth, Dr. Hamady says, is a planet where all is predetermined, where Kismet actually makes undue personal effort blasphemous. Suffering is normal, joy unnatural, resignation mandatory. Immersed in such fatalism, Dr. Hamady's Arabs have scant belief in progress. The rock of their salvation is prayer and humility—not action. Such gospel, she stresses, has been piously seconded by the masters of the Arab's earthly limbo—the landholders, sheikhs, kings, and other potentates. Their convenience and privilege are admirably served when those they exploit are encouraged to attribute their poverty to God's will or foreign villains rather than to themselves or their exploiters.

Even his language, Dr. Hamady points out, conspires to insulate the Arab from purposeful thinking in the here and now. The opulence of the Arabic vocabulary and the intricacies of its grammar put a premium on form at the cost of substance. An Arabic writer is considered a good writer, however turgid and opaque his message, if only he is sonorous, wordy, and syntactically pure. In life as in literature, the author continues, the Arab is long on florid argument, short on precise reasoning. His emotions and his passion for single details are high, but "his ability to generalize and to grasp the whole is low."

These traits, still according to Dr. Hamady, are reflected in the Arab's public institutions. The typical Moslem state is authoritarian, its parliament (if it has one) feudalist or loaded with landowners and tribal chieftains, its administration a morass of nepotism. Religion is more important than patriotism, clan more important than nation. In fact, Dr. Hamady laments, love of country and pride of nationhood are still embryonic in the Arab, if not altogether alien to him.

Are there, then, no attributes in Arab society or personality which are admirable by Western definition? Dr. Hamady tells us

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that parents and the aged are touchingly venerated in Islam. She praises the Arab's instinct for fortitude, for dignified acceptance of pain and bad fortune—the golden side of the fatalist coin. He has, too, a gift for enjoying his own company, for silence, for the serenity of lonely meditation or, at least, of solitude.

From long and direct contact with Arabs in many countries and territories, this reader can agree with Dr. Hamady that these commendable attributes abundantly exist. The author's scholarly apparatus sometimes breaks down, however, under the shibboleths of contemporary Arab politics, as in her momentary nod to the myth of pan-Arabism: "Unity," she writes, "is the basic, underlying norm in (Arab) life. . . . The creation of one great Arab nation is constantly in the mind of all Arab patriots." Having stated this cliché in a few sentences, she uses the rest of her book to demonstrate the contrary, showing that nothing is constant in the Arab mind, that patriotism is far more slogan than reality, and that the "basic norm" of Arab allegiance since immemorial time has been the family, the tribe, and the faith, not empire or federation, or even country.

Where Dr. Hamady errs most, I think, is in her failure to grasp the significance of the Arab portrait which she has drawn. In a closing chapter—on the utility to the West of understanding the reasons for Arab behavior—she seems to feel that the main purpose for such understanding is to learn how to keep the Arabs contented, and how to keep Westerners who must deal with them serene. She suggests, for instance, that, since Arabs are vain, one must flatter them, tell them how mighty their past, how glowing their future. Since Arabs lose themselves in rhetoric and tirades, one should be patient, forgive the bombast, and brush aside the insult. Since they are never punctual, one should arrive late also. Since they are lazy, one should set a lower work-quota for them, and not expect to reach it.

Such advice, I am afraid, is on the relatively trivial level of trade relations and technical assistance. Dr. Hamady apparently does not suspect that larger matters are at stake. She misses the real point: that the disasters of Western and American policy in the Middle East these fifteen years past might have been reduced, and even reversed, if our policy-makers had truly understood the Arab.

The Secular and the "Torah-true"

THE NINETEEN LETTERS ON JUDAISM. By RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH. Prepared by Jacob Breuer in a new edition based on the translation by Rabbi Dr. Bernard Drachman. Philipp Feldheim. 144 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by WALTER H. PLAUT

EVER since its promulgation in Mishnaic times, the doctrine *Torah im derech eretz* has meant what it said: a linking of Torah with the contemporary surrounding civilization. It mattered little whether thick ghetto walls limited such contact to mere passive cultural coexistence or whether—more often than generally imagined—a conscious, active cross-fertilization occurred. Regardless of circumstance, the Diaspora formula for Jewish existence remained the same: Torah with *derech eretz,* tradition *plus* secular culture. But the new age of the beginning 19th century, which wrought havoc with almost every aspect of Western life, changed the meaning of the classic formula as well. As the erstwhile *Judengasse*-dweller strode furiously into the wide open spaces of a whole world's opportunity, he demanded, if he remained in the Jewish fold at all, that the ancient Law now fit his life, that Torah, out of step and out of fashion, conform to his tastes, thoughts, and ways. Judaism needed adjustment, needed reform—and not long thereafter, Leopold Zunz, Abraham Geiger, Samuel Holdheim, their disciples and followers, responded to the demand.

Had these men and their movement unbalanced the formula, had they made Torah subservient to the *Zeitgeist*? Those who called themselves "Torah-true" thought so. The sacred had been tampered with, the law of God relegated to a secondary place. This, said the defenders of the faith, must not be—and neo-Orthodoxy was born. Their leader, Samson Raphael Hirsch, delivered the counter-blow: *Torah im derech eretz,* indeed; but, contrariwise, it was not the Law that needed to fit life, but life the Law; regardless of time, place, circum-

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stance, the Torah was sovereign to any civilization of man. The reformers had impudently put *derech eretz* above Torah; Hirsch declared: Torah above *derech eretz.*

Hirsch carried out his theory in practice —if not in theory. In his own daily life, he unflinchingly adhered to all the traditional commandments, observed the Law piously, and growing older, militantly. He left his prestige position as the Chief Rabbi of Moravia to go to Frankfort to head an independent congregation that was then no larger than a *minyan,* and not a part of the formally organized community; it was Hirsch's belief that Orthodoxy needed to be practiced independently, unsullied by communal heresies. Rightfully, he is considered the father of modern Orthodoxy. Yet his ideological underpinnings do not square with his avowal of Torah *above* secular culture; they are for the most part 19th-century European, and not unlike the very premises of Reform which he so vehemently attacked.

BEARING witness to this strange phenomenon are the *Nineteen Letters on Judaism,* which Hirsch wrote in 1838 at the age of twenty-eight and which remains his most renowned book. They are addressed to Benjamin, an imaginary typical young intellectual of the day, to whom Judaism had lost relevancy. Toward Benjamin's return (and that of the legion of Benjamins), Hirsch composed a fiery apologia for Orthodoxy, calling for use of "the general sciences as auxiliary studies for the understanding of Torah." Re-reading the *Letters* (in this new edition and more polished translation), one is struck by the way in which this valiant defender of the faith, without being quite aware of it, speaks the words of his opponents—even, at times, going farther in their own direction. Judaism, in Hirsch's definition, emerges as largely a dogmatic religion with major emphasis on tenets of belief and sets of observances. The national factor is only vaguely dealt with, limited in effect to a designation of Israel as a *Religions-nation.* Israel occupied a territory and constituted a state, but these, in Hirsch's view, were means only for the people's "spiritual calling." Hirsch advocated the Jewish religious mission as strongly as any of his universalistic Reform confrères; he conceived that mission to be largely an individual task, and hailed the Emancipation as a new ground for it. (Sensing his affinity to Reform, Abraham Geiger, the intellectual leader of the movement, in two comprehensive reviews in the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für judische Theologie,* called Hirsch "sublime and noble," his interpretation of Judaism "lofty." And the late Kaufmann Kohler, when he was president of the Hebrew Union College, described Hirsch as the man responsible for his own liberation from "the thralldom of the blind" and his transformation into "a modern man.")

But Hirsch's use of contemporary German philosophical methodology may be regarded as more significant even than his unconscious espousal of reform emphases. He puts great stress on understanding Judaism from within (*"aus sich selbst heraus"*) and finds fault with Maimonides and Mendelssohn for incorporating foreign elements into the ancient faith. No outside criteria, no devoutly constructed hypotheses may be applied to Judaism. Judaism must be *organically* comprehended. Yet this, precisely, is what Hirsch did *not* do. The distinction between investigating Judaism from without and from within points to Hegel's plea to consider phenomena not alone as they appear to us (*"für uns"*), but as we feel them in their inner meaning (*"für sich"*). When Hirsch proposes to extract this inner, basic Jewish spirit from Bible and Talmud, he follows Herder, to whom the literature of a people reveals its most fundamental characteristics. The Hirsch approach resembles most, perhaps, that of the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden, a group of young intellectuals in the Berlin of 1819 who were banded together to rehabilitate Judaism, to trace systematically the individual parts to "the basic principle of the whole," and to treat the subject in accordance "with its reasonableness." Hirsch argued similarly in his *Letters*: that Judaism's ways are many-faceted, but if correctly understood are but parts of one harmonious system, of the All-One. Moreover, "there must be sense in all the commandments"—they must be reasonable to be worthy of observance. Hardly the old-time religion, which considered the observance of the Law a natural phenomenon, a matter of course, without seeking to rationalize it. Hardly a Judaism pure of foreign influences: among

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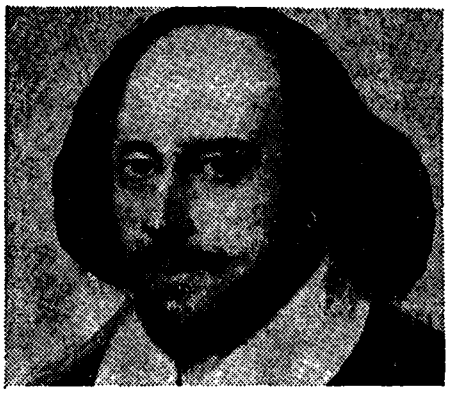
members of the Verein were Zunz—founder of the "Science of Judaism"—and Edward Gans and Heinrich Heine—both later converted to Christianity.*

I SUGGEST it is precisely the Westernization, the universalized aspirations, the genteel norms and urbane manners of the *Nineteen Letters on Judaism,* which explains the extent of the little book's significance, and especially its profound initial impact. With the coming of Emancipation, to many a young man of intellect and scholarly bent Judaism and modern thought appeared incompatible. Judaism was understood to mean a good dose of Talmudic ideas mixed with the social ingredients of the ghetto. Graetz was among those repelled, disenchanted—until Hirsch's treatise came his way. Suddenly, what had been painfully lacking became to Graetz abundantly clear; he discovered "an idea of Judaism never heard nor anticipated before"; Hirsch became his idol, the Ezra of his "spiritual Galut"; he went so far as to live with his master for two years. What startled Graetz and so many of his contemporaries was that a full-scale defense of traditional Judaism had been undertaken in meticulous, solemn German by one whose education, professional life, and political outlook were likewise German. Here obviously was a man of classical and modern education, versed in contemporary science, acquainted with the thought of the leading minds of his day; this man and his book gave the lie to those who equated Orthodox Judaism with superstition and the older generation. In that generation, or in any previous one, Hirsch's enthusiastic affirmation of European culture would have caused his excommunication, but to the German Jew of the 19th century it represented the beginning of an epoch. Orthodoxy now had arrived, it had become respectable.

For this same reason, the *Letters* remain popular, as do all of Hirsch's works. Here in America, in England, and in Israel, translations and new editions of his vast literary output have appeared with increasing fre-

* For a full documentation of the influence of Western critical thought upon Hirsch, see the recent revealing article by Noah H. Rosenbloom, in which the *Letters* are labeled flatly a "Hegelian exposition" (*Historia Judaica,* April 1960).



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quency. Orthodoxy still feels the need to be modern, still wants to be part. If Hirsch once before, as Jacob Breuer points out in the Introduction, solved "the unbearable tension between the Torah and the new era," in the space age now, his writings may again achieve the same.

Will they? The warm glow of enthusiasm, the honest convictions, the dogged courage of one man seeking almost single-handed to stem the flight from traditional Judaism still ring true. But is that enough? When pressed for exposition, Hirsch responds with exhortation. How is revelation to be regarded, one would want to know: historic fact of the one time and the one place or a theological concept that constitutes a continuous, on-going process, or both? Hirsch does not say; he affirms, but does not discuss; nor does he engage in serious exposition of other major problems of Jewish theology: God, covenant, prayer, destiny. Without such exposition, it is doubtful that many modern Benjamins can be won over.

IT NEED not be assumed that Orthodoxy, because it is Orthodoxy, must be unable to arrive at precise theological formulations. The doctrine Torah above *derech eretz* can be clearly etched and developed to its logical limit. Isaac Breuer, Hirsch's grandson and most illustrious disciple, did this when he assigned a "meta-historical" role to the Jewish people, who alone are able to cope with the dark groping and infinite tragedy of mankind. The Jews, according to Breuer's thinking, through the covenant at Sinai, were raised above the ebb and flow of human history and entrusted with the Torah, the one and genuine scheme of the Kingdom of God. But only those Jews who obey absolutely the rules of the divinely fashioned community are truly Jews. All others (even the Orthodox who associate with a *Gemeinde* that includes non-Orthodox) are "traitors [to the] nation of God." Inevitably, perhaps, such doctrine would freeze and crystallize Judaism—as the Agudat Yisrael, its organizational offspring, undoubtedly attempted to do. But the virtue here was the virtue of perspicuity—a quality with which theologians have always had their particular difficulty.

While the *Letters* will not provide a philosophic base for an Orthodox *Weltanschauung*, they will by their fervor continue to appeal to those already possessing religiosity. They will scarcely add souls to the roster of traditional Judaism, but they will, for the Orthodox Jew who subconsciously feels himself alienated from his environment, provide a 122-year-old reason for maintaining that secular thought is not out of bounds. Perhaps, finally, a modern re-reading of the Hirsch classic may lead to the very opposite of what the author intended: the notion that Torah and *derech eretz* remain suspended in a constant tension; that in this interplay, subtle yet dynamic, varying in time and space yet consistent in essence, lies incarnate the secret of Jewish existence.

A Southern Allegory

THE VIOLENT BEAR IT AWAY. By FLANNERY O'CONNOR. Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy. 243 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by ALGENE BALLIF

THE VIOLENT BEAR IT AWAY, second novel of the remarkable young Southern writer Flannery O'Connor, is about people whose psychopathology can never for a moment be mistaken for anything else, so that from the outset it is free to communicate to us on other levels, to take hold of our imaginations in the manner of myth or parable or allegory, to make its own connections with the world in which we live. Whether the novel successfully exercises this freedom is another matter. Its characters and the world *they* live in—the last outposts of unregenerate Protestantism—seem so bizarre, irrelevant, and remote that one is tempted to dismiss the book as a virtuoso fantasy in the Southern "gothic" mode. But there is something about the literary gift of Miss O'Connor that holds one back from so easy an exit. She is a writer whose dedication to the craft of fiction, and to an evocation of the atavistic experiences of a vanishing rural breed, is so relentless and intense that there is no question she intends more than we are able to receive. What her intentions are may never be available to us in any immediate and lucid form, but they are felt, nonetheless.

The novel focuses upon a few days in the life of a fourteen-year-old orphan boy called Tarwater, whose great-uncle, a self-appoint-

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ed "prophet" who has reared him in the backwoods of Tennessee, has just died at the breakfast table. The boy, who has been raised "to expect the Lord's call himself," begins digging a grave, and then is interrupted by two Negroes who come to buy some of the old man's moonshine. Tarwater goes to the still to fetch it, gets drunk himself instead, and passes out. After nightfall he rouses, sets fire to the house (in which he thinks his great-uncle's corpse still sits), and flees. He then hitches a ride to the nearest town and winds up at the house of his uncle Rayber, an atheist schoolteacher who lives with his idiot son. Rayber has been his great-uncle's direst enemy, and his idiot boy the object of the old man's fiercest obsession: to kidnap and baptize him—a "duty" he has enjoined Tarwater to fulfill should he not do so himself. The boy stays with Rayber just long enough to translate the inscrutable conflict that has taken hold of him into an act of violence: he drowns the idiot, and as he does so finds himself performing the baptismal rites learned from his great-uncle.

Stunned into yet deeper stupefaction by what he has done, Tarwater then strikes out for home territory. He hitches a ride with a homosexual, who tenders him drink, sedately ravishes him after the boy has passed out, and leaves him naked in the woods with his clothes piled neatly beside him. When Tarwater comes to and perceives what has happened, he burns the leaves and bushes at the profaned spot and then sets out for his backwoods clearing on foot. When he finally reaches the charred house he discovers that the old man was properly buried before he set fire to it by one of the Negroes who came for liquor. In "a final revelation" Tarwater beholds his dread destiny, understands that he has at last been called by the Lord, and goes forth toward the city to meet "the fate that awaited him."

BEHIND the gross topography of the plot, Miss O'Connor gives us a close squint at her characters—and from a perspective that has a marked tendency to favor the double image. Thus, when Tarwater is digging the old man's grave, all his rebellious and "rational" impulses materialize into the hallucination of another person standing at his side—a "stranger" who becomes a "faithful friend," a "wise voice," a "mentor." Tarwater's relation to his double, this other self, refers of course to the traditional conception of man's dualism of his being half angel, half devil; and things go pretty much his "friend's" way—until the murder is done. Then the boy begins to perceive him as sinister, as "his adversary"; and after the rape, he becomes aware that he had recognized this adversary in the person of his homosexual ravisher. Later, on a hill overlooking his great-uncle's place, this "counselor" returns again to tempt him with freedom from bondage to "the life the old man had prepared for him." But the boy, fresh from the outrage of having been violated, repulses him, "making a rising wall of fire between him and the grinning presence." "Burned clean" of his demon, Tarwater thinks he is free to live his own life—until he discovers the old man's grave.

During the few days Tarwater is with him, the novel's focus shifts to his uncle Rayber. One can scarcely avoid the impression that in Rayber Miss O'Connor means to represent not only a more elaborate version of the boy's personal devil, but also a grotesque view of one of the horrors of the modern world. Rayber, supposed to be a thoroughly secularized type, feels himself "divided in two—a violent and a rational self." His "rational" half is the "expert on [psychological] testing" who thinks in the jargon of the social worker and wants to reduce the boy to "a piece of information inside his head." His other half is "the stuff of which fanatics and madmen are made." The most irrational aspect of his split, we learn, is a "secret affliction" which attacks him as a "horrifying love" for his idiot son, "a love for the child so outrageous that he would be left shocked and depressed for days, and trembling for his sanity." The child has always resembled the old man, the "prophet," we are told, by whom Rayber himself was kidnapped and baptized at the age of seven—an event to which he refers as "his own childhood's seduction." In Tarwater, too, Rayber sees "his own imprisoned image," and is driven to wrest him from "the old man's ghostly grasp." At every turn, what Miss O'Connor has made of Rayber's divided self is quite devastating; every representation of what he takes to be his rationality reveals to us another monstrous irrationality: "He kept himself up-

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These are some of the controversial topics discussed in the last few issues of the *Jewish Newsletter* by such outstanding liberals as Erich Fromm, Hans Kohn, James P. Warburg, Norman Thomas, Rabbi Richard E. Singer, Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron, Prof. Arnold J. Toynbee, and others.

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right on a very narrow line between madness and emptiness and when the time came for him to lose his balance, he intended to lurch toward emptiness and fall on the side of his choice."

What seems to lie at the heart of all this dualism and image-splitting and spiritual tug-of-war is an elaborate fantasy of what one can only call homosexual incest. The language of the novel is penetrated with images that suggest it. Tarwater is afraid of the "seeds" his great-uncle has planted in him, which "might strike some day" and subject him to the "calling."

> It was as if he were afraid that if he let his eye rest for an instant longer than was needed to place something—a spade, a hoe, the mule's hind quarters before his plow, the red furrow under him—that the thing would suddenly stand before him, strange and terrifying. . . . He did all he could to avoid this threatened intimacy of creation.

He senses Rayber, too, as someone who wants to get inside him, to expose and violate his most private parts. The old man himself was once outraged by Rayber when after living with him for three months he discovered that " 'all the time he was. . . . Taking secret tests on me, his own kin, crawling into my soul through the back door.' " Rayber himself feels he has never gotten rid of the old man's "seeds," and is aroused by Tarwater to a desire to avenge his own early "seduction" by "saving" the boy and shaping him in his own image. And Tarwater, thinking himself purged at last of the insidious invasions of both these men, finds himself literally raped by someone he takes to be the "stranger-friend," his other self, who in turn bears unmistakable resemblances to Rayber. Finally, the boy is driven to submit to what he was most trying to escape, the old man himself. In his last ecstasy Tarwater feels the "seeds opening one at a time in his blood": the impregnation burgeons and he can no longer deny its fact. Thus he is taken over and seduced, in these symbolic ways, by all his known kin—by the old man, by Rayber, even by himself.

But in drawing attention to this strain in the novel I do not mean to suggest that it is really (i.e., surreptitiously) about incest. *The Violent Bear It Away* is fundamentally about Tarwater's conflict over the question

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of his identity—which is tantamount to his "destiny"—and all its evocation of incestuous dread and longing, in conjunction with its character-splitting and dualism, informs that conflict. Tarwater is a boy who doesn't know who he is, who doesn't belong to himself, who is a battlefield for the warring identities of the old man and Rayber. Possessed by both of them, he is struggling to wrench himself free, to expel them from inside him (his very name is the name of a purgative, and he literally vomits and starves himself as his conflict intensifies). He is engaged in a desperate and doomed attempt to find a third, a separate, an independent self.

THIS way of dealing with the problem of identity—an implication that at its roots are incest fantasies—may impress us as a device suited only to Miss O'Connor's very peculiar and morbidly eccentric characters. On second thought, however, it strikes me as having some relevance to the "religious" origins of the problem, even as we experience it today. One of the distinguishing features of Protestantism has been its belief in direct, private, and intimate connection with God. ("Nearer My God to Thee" is one of its cherished hymns; "to walk and talk with Jesus" one of its pleasantest pastimes; and even the popular song in America has recently included "religious" ballads that sound very like erotic yearnings toward God and Christ.) At the same time, however, Protestantism has always been identified with, if not actually held responsible for, the new social organizations which have issued in what we call "modern man"—man alienated from himself and others. Furthermore, Protestantism has long been associated with modern man's attempt to be "self-made," to create himself, to become, so to speak, his own father—an aspiration that suggests limitless possibilities for getting itself mixed up somewhere along the dark psychic line with the kind of homosexual, incestuous fantasy that Miss O'Connor insinuates into her novel.

How literally are we to take all this? In some sense, I believe, Miss O'Connor takes it literally herself and wants her reader to as well. The kind of Protestant experience she depicts is above all a literal one; for the fundamentalist there is nothing symbolic

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about the Book of Revelation—the beast with seven heads and ten horns is as palpable to him as the unicorn in the garden turned out to be. What Miss O'Connor seems to be saying in *The Violent Bear It Away* is that the primitive Protestant experience is a breaking loose into consciousness and activity of fantasies which can be recognized as unconscious components of the modern experiences of alienation and self-creation—and that the very primitiveness and literalness of that experience constitute its modernity. It is Miss O'Connor's brilliant, if oblique, way of seeing that the unleashing of the unconscious which Protestantism represents has largely shaped the perilous conditions of existence in the modern world.

Yet for all its quasi-allegorical, fantastic brilliance, *The Violent Bear It Away* doesn't quite persuade us to suspend our disbelief. Kafka, one recalls, also wrote out of "pathological" fantasies, and often assimilated them to a theological point of view. But it was Kafka's genius to use this fantastic material as if it were common, ordinary experience, to establish the grotesque and incredible in the rather banal and matter-of-fact context which made them seem an integral part of it. Miss O'Connor's fantasies, on the other hand, come at us too abruptly, too nakedly, too literally from the realm of the unconscious; and therefore it is as if her characters are strangers from a foreign land, without an emissary to translate their story into the language of the kind of experience we understand.

Man the Measure

HUMANISM. By MOSES HADAS. Harper. 132 pp. $3.50.

ISSUES OF FREEDOM. By HERBERT J. MULLER. Harper. 170 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by MAURICE COHEN

THESE two short but significant books are additions to the World Perspective series edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. Moses Hadas's *Humanism* deals with humanism in the literature of classical Greece; Herbert Muller's *Issues of Freedom* discusses the meanings and problems of freedom in the contemporary world. The books are related, for Hadas's avowed purpose is to show that modern notions of individualism derive from Greek ideals, while Muller as historian agrees with this interpretation and as philosophical essayist shares the liberalism underlying Hadas's analysis of Greek culture.

Humanism centers on a single theme, defined precisely by Hadas himself: "What the world has admired in the Greeks is the remarkably high level of their originality and achievements, and this high level premises a deeply held conviction of the importance of individual attainment. . . . The important thing is that the sphere of the human and the sphere of the divine are disparate." Hadas believes that "there may well be a causal nexus between the conviction that the spheres of gods and men are disparate and the extraordinary cultural attainments of the Greeks." Such a conclusion involves a psychological assumption which Hadas does not make explicit, but which it seems fair to attribute to him, namely that men are most capable of realizing themselves when they need not believe in a loving God who concerns himself with the affairs of men. The Greeks achieved what they did, Hadas appears to be saying, because, unlike the Jews and Christians, they forced themselves to stand on their own feet: there was "no outside power to wheedle or blame, and no refuge to console failure."

Hadas supports his argument for the dominance of the doctrine of "man the measure" during the classical period of Greek civilization with critical discussions of the Homeric ethos, beliefs about heroes, the tragic view, and philosophy. He recognizes too that the Greek attitude toward competition was a natural corollary of this doctrine, pointing out that the ideal of Homer's heroes—"to strive always for excellence and to surpass all others"—was operative throughout classical society. The Greeks' frank willingness to expend themselves in competition with their fellows was thus a major cause of their brilliant accomplishments: freed from the constraints of superstition, they were able to concentrate on secular pursuits, stimulating one another to a maximum of effort.

Hadas is quite right in emphasizing the dominance of Homer in the Golden Age. I do wish, however, that he had distinguished the ideal of competitive excellence maintained by Homer's *heroes* from Homer's *own* attitude. For there is a difference: despite

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Homer's outward objectivity—like Shakespeare, he never comments directly—the structure and tone of the *Iliad* in particular are, as the Greeks themselves recognized, profoundly tragic. Achilles suffers the consequences of his wrath; thus he is different, because chastened, in the great final scene where he confronts Priam, another sufferer formerly proud. The Homeric ethos, accordingly, is not at all the same as the ethic of Homer's heroes, and it was sensitivity to the former which led Goethe to say that "from Homer and Polygnotus I every day learn more clearly that in our life here above ground we have, properly speaking, to enact Hell." It is particularly important to recognize the difference when discussing Greek humanism, for if we believe simply that "Homer's world is washed in a haze of glory," we are in danger of overlooking the possibility that Greeks themselves could be aware of important limitations to the doctrine of man the measure.

Postponing for the moment, however, further consideration of the limitations of this doctrine, I wish to emphasize the over-all success of *Humanism* as a positive interpretation of Greek individualism. I know of no other non-technical study which isolates as clearly and accurately as does Hadas's book, the dominance of competitive and—by Jewish and Christian standards—secular individualism in ancient Greece.

MULLER's essay is in close agreement with the spirit of *Humanism,* and his definition of freedom would have pleased Hadas's Greeks: "the condition of being able to choose and to carry out purposes." Muller believes that such power is the essential condition of man's claim to special worth and dignity, arguing that the end of freedom is self-realization, "the primary meaning of the evolution of man and of the history of civilization." Muller's strength lies in his honesty. Unashamed of espousing common sense attitudes, he writes clearly and simply, and, as he states early in *Freedom,* is not afraid to be explicit about his preferences. He has strong dislikes—he is exceedingly critical of social science, religion, and philosophy—but he tries to be fair by employing a Thomistic procedure in the chapters of his book, presenting objections, then advantages, finally

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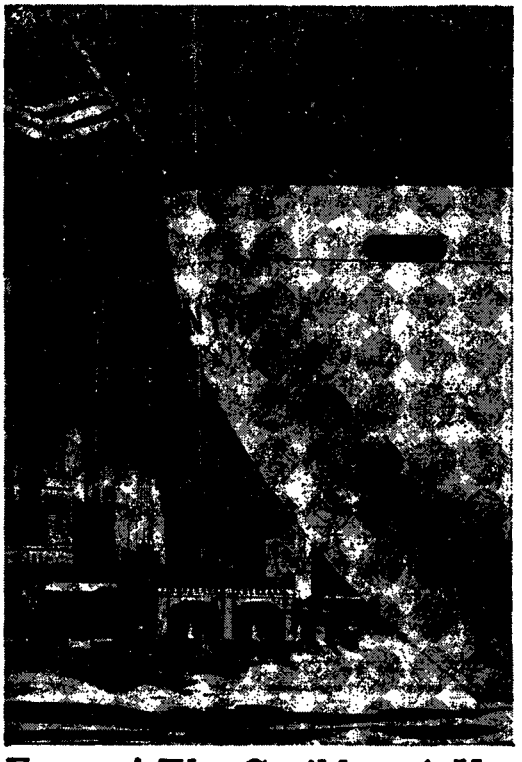

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summarizing and reconciling insofar as he can.

His comments on religion make him sound like the ancient Greeks described in *Humanism.* Of himself he asserts bluntly: "As one who professes no knowledge of the ultimate or no intimacy with deity, I am adhering to a principle of relativity and final uncertainty, in the conviction that local, temporal, and relative goods may still be real and sufficient goods." Not surprisingly, Muller sees in science man's best hope for finding his way in the world; according to him, it "remains our surest means to freedom in thought." For immediate personal relations, basic fellow feeling supplements science. I found therefore while reading Muller that he reminded me not only of John Stuart Mill but of Hume, who also disliked metaphysics and religion and grounded his ethics on "our natural humanity, the source of natural sympathy and fellow feeling."

As I have suggested already, there are important resemblances between the themes of Hadas's *Humanism* and Muller's *Freedom.* Both authors accept the notion of man the measure, and there is much in common between the ideal of *aristeia* and Muller's concept of freedom as self-realization. The former, to be sure, depends more on public notice and approval; the latter is less competitive and aristocratic; but both the ideals involve similar attitudes towards the individual, and both suffer, I believe, from related limitations.

Looking more closely at the Greek notion, I think it advisable to take into account the possibility that the Greeks paid a formidable price for their achievements. Within Greek religion, for example, there is evidence of a conflict which seems to underlie all of Greek culture: on the one hand, there is Olympianism, masculine in its psychology, as Hadas points out; on the other hand, there is Orphism, in many respects a continuation of the ancient Chthonic religion which Olympianism sought to replace, and decidedly more feminine in its psychology. Despite Hadas's argument that the difference between these tendencies created no real problem, the opposed outlooks were never satisfactorily reconciled, and in my opinion, their incompatibility is evidence of an ugly tension that manifested itself elsewhere in such diverse but related phenomena as the

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notorious quarrelsomeness of the Greeks, the desperate segregation of upper-class women, and the prevalence of homosexuality.

Even if we concentrate on Greek literary sources, there are features which make me pause. I am referring to the joylessness of most of the literature and the philosophy that Hadas uses to support his definition of Greek humanism. I have already mentioned Goethe's comment on Homer; I would add now that it is not only Plato who shuns the release of ordinary pleasure, but that Epicureanism, singled out by Hadas as "the true representative of the authentic Hellenic tradition," has as its central tenet the definition of pleasure as—the absence of pain! Related to this fear of the kind of emotion we value today is the fact that there are pathetically few depictions of tenderness in Greek literature. Hector and Andromache come to mind immediately, but after them, what comparable portrait of love between man and woman does the literature offer? The truth is that the relation between the sexes is unsatisfactory not only by modern standards but also by those of the Old Testament. To what extent that relation was cause, and to what extent effect, of the whole cultural situation, I do not know; but it clearly has much to do with those aspects of the *aristeia* ideal which often make it the stuff of tragedy: the destruction that could result from blind competition, the ever present possibility of black and violent pessimism, the sheer selfishness of such self-assertion.

As for Olympianism, I wonder whether the attitudes underlying that religion, encouraging as they undoubtedly were to competitive individualism, were favorable to the development of a more generous ideal of man. For man molds himself after his gods, and the religion of Homer's heroes involves not only separation of man from god but competition between man and god. Echoes of this estrangement persist even in later authors, along with a curious predilection for stories in which fathers are injured or humiliated (Agamemnon in the *Agamemnon,* Creon in *Antigone,* Laius and Oedipus in *Odeipus Rex,* Theres in *Alcestis*). Simply on the psychological level, then, I am not certain that the Greek attitude toward the gods was necessarily a superior one for the purpose of keeping generations of men free in a culture, for it seems to me that in the long run love is more liberating than indifference or antagonism. I wonder in fact whether the Jewish and Christian idea of a loving and beloved God has not been more favorable to the development of gentleness and responsibility, traits essential to another kind of individualism. Certainly Jewish and Christian writers manifest a deeper and more active human concern, and if some have been plagued by fears of the flesh, this is unfortunate, but not essential to the positive content of their religions. As for the ethic of the tragic hero before he is chastened and its later variations, self-centered competitiveness is tiresome, and the fear of emotion characterizing Epicureanism repellent. Much more important, an ethic which cannot harmonize individualism with compassion for all men is not merely irrelevant today: it is dangerous.

This brings me to Muller's conception of freedom as self-realization. He states early in his book that man is very much a social animal: "Man's sociality does indeed provide a natural basis for idealism in that his selfish interests always include the interest of some other selves, the need for warmth and affection; it involves a natural sympathy and natural piety, as in the care of the dead, which may flower in ideals of our common humanity and natural rights." Nevertheless, despite this fine, Santayana-like passage, Muller tends to slight the ideal dimensions of personality, and by exalting excessively the active character and disparaging the need for constant reflection, he reveals the extent to which his conception of freedom is reactive. He tends also to stress the social origins of personality rather than the mature individual's deep involvement in interests which cannot meaningfully be called "selfish." Freedom for such a person should not be called mere self-realization, for it is often revealed in the capacity to forget about striving for personal distinction and realizing one's own potentialities. In the West, this capacity has been fostered by Judaism and Christianity; thus, modern conceptions of individualism and freedom owe more to these religions than either *Humanism* or *Freedom* concedes.

In short, happy as I am to be able to agree with the greater part of what Hadas and Muller say, I must plead for some sup-

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plementation to their positions—specifically, for more subtle consideration of the positive contributions of Western religion to modern ideals of individualism and freedom. Once the thrill of rebellion is past, in order to continue being fully operative in the world, we need more than preoccupation with self-realization or bleak endurance. We should distinguish, therefore, between freedom as release from fear of the supernatural and freedom as immunity to the paralyzing anxiety which can be caused by the absence of a comprehensive belief-structure. The great religions have at least attempted to face the latter kind of anxiety, which, despite Muller's optimism, pervades modern life and is by no means simply neurotic. It is easy enough to point out the deleterious effects of religion when it fails to emerge from superstition or hardens into repressive ritualism; but what about the effects on one's thoughts of himself and of others when he believes there is no longer anything deeply worthwhile to live for?

Reformers and Intellectuals

THEIR BROTHERS' KEEPERS: MORAL STEWARDSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800–1865. By CLIFFORD S. GRIFFIN. Rutgers University Press. 332 pp. $6.00.

THE MIND AND SPIRIT OF JOHN PETER ALTGELD: SELECTED WRITINGS AND ADDRESSES. Edited by HENRY M. CHRISTMAN. University of Illinois Press. 183 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by ERIC L. MCKITRICK

EACH of these two recent books from the university presses describes a different example of the American crusading spirit, and each of the books embodies a different attitude toward its material; yet both attitudes are actually part of the same liberal intellectual tradition. Clifford Griffin's study —whose title, *Their Brothers' Keepers,* does much to prejudge the author's case before it is made—is laid in the pre-Civil War period. It shows the leaders of the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, the American Education Society, the American Sunday School Union, the American Anti-Slavery Society, the American Peace Society, and the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance taking on the role of moral caretakers for the whole American community. These men are seen engaging in projects of uplift whose aim was "social control," but whose effect was to invade the privacy of individual citizens. The treatment is gentle and urbane, and done in a spirit of quiet fun. Oozing from nearly every line is the author's conviction that he is not dealing with a great subject.

Henry Christman's *Mind and Spirit of John Peter Altgeld,* on the other hand, is a very different article. Altgeld, reform governor of Illinois in the 90's, champion of the rights of labor and defender of the oppressed, is shown through his own utterances and through the editor's able preface and commentary as a man of intense dedication and lonely dignity. The volume will probably be received in the spirit in which it is presented; no respectable writer for over a generation has dreamed of questioning the purity of its subject. And yet both John Peter Altgeld and Mr. Griffin's "moral trustees" worked in much the same tradition; out of a conviction, rightly or wrongly held, of superior insight, they were trying to improve their fellow creatures. Logically, then, the same plane of dignity, wherever it might be located, ought to hold all these reformers; our understanding of them would profit from their being examined, whether favorably or not, on the same plane of analysis.

The early reformers, according to Mr. Griffin, drew their zeal from the Puritan heritage: "These men thought themselves God's earthly stewards and trustees." The organizing theme of the book is thus trusteeship—a self-convinced elect carrying out their self-conferred responsibility of persuading the majority, morally frailer than they, to behave. The devotees distributed Bibles and tracts, inveighed against the evils of slavery, and encouraged people to give up whisky and loose living. Mr. Griffin's sense of a unified "trustee elect" is quickened by the discovery that a number of its leaders (for example, the Tappan brothers of New York) were officers in more than one of the societies, creating as it were a kind of interlocking directorate. The birth of the Republican party in the mid-1850's, Mr. Griffin argues, represented the culminating effort of the trustees to create a strong political vehicle for their work. The new party

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was "the party of morality"; the Democrats, presumably, were the party of something else. I am afraid that Mr. Griffin has taken his one idea—"trusteeship" and its several synonyms—and run it into the ground. More than a verbal definition is needed to give unity to a subject matter. And even so, it makes a difference which definition you pick; your choice at that critical point can predispose a whole set of descriptive results and rule out a whole set of others.

MR. GRIFFIN has described only one side—the rigid, meddlesome, bluenose side—of the American reform tradition. When we come to the other, represented by John Peter Altgeld, we watch our P's and Q's. Altgeld is the man, careless of reputation before the seats of the mighty, who fought to establish equality and justice for the lower classes. His stand on behalf of the alleged Haymarket conspirators, and his opposition to federal military interference in the Pullman strike, show him as the man who refuses to yield when he is convinced that a thing is right. No one—least of all this reviewer—wants to disturb that reputation. Yet why do the Altgelds generally make out better in our histories than the crusaders for temperance or even those for abolition? Altgeld was intrepid and heroic, but so were the other crusaders; much depends on the idiom in which you describe them. Granted that they were intolerant, yet it could be argued, for example, that the saloon-smashers' dedication to humanity outweighed their pharisaism. They attacked what in the 1830's and 40's was very generally, and quite correctly, defined as a terrible social problem. As for Altgeld, there is plenty of evidence that much of the driving force to his most famous deeds on behalf of the downtrodden came from a connoisseur's relish for private vengeance and a self-righteous determination not to be personally upstaged by anyone.

But the main point in this comparison, I would say, is not so much the relative moral value of the various reform crusades, nor even the relative personal worthiness of the various reformers (a formula can certainly be found within which we may cherish them all), but rather the intellectual tradition out of which American historians write about reform of any kind. In American culture,

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Assignment in Israel

Edited by BERNARD MANDELBAUM
Provost, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Simon Greenberg, Bishop James A. Pike, Moshe Davis, Margaret Mead, Leon Keyserling, Anna Sokolow, Zino Francescatti, Dore Schary, and James A. Plaut—to name only a few—give their impressions of Israel's achievements and future potential, and in so doing discuss Jewish-Arab relations and other problems of the Middle East, methods of improving education, cultural adjustment, race relations and free economy versus authoritarian planning. Published October 12

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NEGRO POLITICS

By JAMES Q. WILSON

Not since we published *Black Bourgeoisie* by Franklin Frazier has there been such a book to illuminate the inner working of the Negro community. Wilson cuts through the rhetoric of race advancement to show what forces are really at work within a northern Negro city. This book will shatter some of the widely held myths about the homogeneity and singleness of purpose of Negroes. These myths have hampered efforts at interracial cooperation, and made impossible an understanding of what is going on in the Negro body politic.

Wilson discusses real people acting in concrete situations. Some of the specific problems discussed in the book include: differences in political style between Negro leaders, for example, Dawson and Adam Clayton Powell; the attitude toward co-operation with Jews and other minorities; attitudes of Negro politicians toward Negro civic organizations like NAACP and the Urban League.

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the experiences of the reformer and those of the intellectual have always run parallel, and, as often as not, they have even been identical. The result is that when the intellectual, as historian, goes to write about reform, he is dealing in the most intimate way with his own values. And those values, as Seymour Lipset has recently pointed out, are in anything but a state of harmony; they have always been at war with themselves. Thus, as intellectuals, we demand elite status without quite daring to come out and say so; but as preceptors to the hoi polloi, we revere and celebrate the egalitarian virtues.

This divided mind tends to be reflected in the way historians (and other intellectuals) deal with the history of reform activity: they write approvingly of only one side of it. The élitist, Puritan, "trustee" side is either suppressed or stripped of all dignity; the egalitarian side is featured as the only legitimate one, the side that really matters. But any reformer is by nature an individual who imposes himself upon others; neither the reformer nor the intellectual has ever stopped, or *could* stop, being a "trustee." The early reformers were only a little more open about it.

Distributing Bibles and tracts has long since gone out of style, but ridiculing all this now is surely rather gratuitous, especially in an intellectual tradition which has always constituted something of a priesthood, despite its present secularity. The college boy who in 1936 went off organizing for the CIO derived his deepest satisfactions, whether he knew it or not, from a sense of trusteeship, and this may have had something to do with his shock and disappointment when his egalitarianism wasn't taken seriously. The tradition, then, has always been élitist; it could not possibly function otherwise, and we may as well see it whole again. The intellectuals and reformers of the past generation have been a little too crafty about concealing that side of their activity in order to get people to listen to them—with the result, in many a case, that they ended up concealing it even from themselves.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

IRVING HOWE, the well-known critic, is the co-editor, with Eliezer Greenberg, of *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories.*

HAL LEHRMAN'S many articles on Middle Eastern affairs have been appearing in COMMENTARY since 1946.

WALTER H. PLAUT, a new contributor, is the Rabbi of Temple Emanuel in Great Neck, N. Y.

ALGENE BALLIF has reviewed for COMMENTARY before, and her article, "Anne Frank on Broadway," appeared in November 1955.

MAURICE COHEN teaches philosophy at the Juilliard School in New York.

ERIC L. MCKITRICK, another new contributor, is the author of *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction.*

JACK D. TARCHER 1896–1960

We mourn the loss of Jack D. Tarcher, who helped found COMMENTARY *and remained on its Publication Committee until his death September 5. In his devotion to the magazine, he was an exceptionally ready and active friend. We shall greatly miss his encouragement and counsel.*

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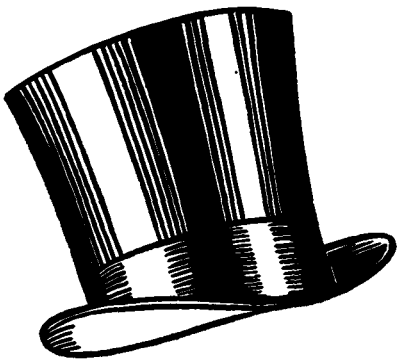

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